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Economy heading towards brink of recession

BY JANET BUSH AND PHILIP WEBSTER

BRITAIN will move perilously close to recession over the next few months, the Bank of England admitted yesterday as it predicted that growth would be "close to zero" for the first half of this year.

Even after that, it expects growth to reach only 0.5 to 1 per cent for 1999 as a whole. The predictions were coupled with a promise from the Bank to go on cutting interest rates as much as necessary, but the gloomy forecast prompted Tories to accuse the Government of driving the economy to the brink of recession.

Francis Maude, the Shadow Chancellor, said that Labour's higher taxes, penalties for sav-

when its last Inflation Report was published in November: one in four.

Lower interest rates would offset the slower growth, Mr King said, and he hinted strongly at further cuts, the Monetary Policy Committee—which last week reduced base rates for the fifth time in as many months—had not reached a "pause", he said, adding that without last week's half-point, the committee would have undershot the Government's 2.5 per cent target for underlying inflation.

Mr King explicitly admitted that some members of the MPC believe that the Bank's latest inflation forecasts were too high, which one economist said was "Bankspeak" for a disagreement on rates that suggested some members were pushing for a bigger cut last week.

Mr King acknowledged that the state of the world economy was, if anything, looking more hazardous now than it did late last year, citing in particular the deep uncertainty in Brazil after its devaluation. He also said the world appeared to be returning to a 1960s style era of low inflation, moving away from what he described as the abnormal inflationary decades of the 1970s and 1980s.

Although the Bank is more pessimistic about growth in the short-term, it is more optimistic than it was in November about the economy's ability to bounce back. The Bank is predicting that recovery will start from the middle of this year, with growth picking up sharply next year and in 2001.

The Confederation of British Industry showed little alarm at the new forecasts, arguing that the prospect of slower growth justified another half-point cut in rates. But the Conservatives will use the figures to step up their onslaught against the Government in the run-up to the Budget.

Yesterday Mr. Hague accused the Prime Minister of "conveniently forgetting" his pre-election promises not to raise taxes. He urged Mr Blair to add together figures from the last two budgets. "They show that the total tax increase for this financial year... is £6,800 million which is £260 for every taxpayer in the country, in pension taxes, in petrol taxes, in mortgage taxes. He does not seem to be aware of it at all."

Mr Blair replied that under Labour the spending deficit had been slashed, employment was up and mortgage rates were at a 30-year low.

Peter Riddell, page 12



Rescue workers searching wreckage of chalets in the hamlet of Le Tour, near Chamonix in the French Alps yesterday. An avalanche there on Tuesday claimed ten lives

British avalanche hero pulls three to safety

FROM SUSAN BELL
IN CHAMONIX

A BRITISH man risked his life to pull three people to safety from the debris of a chalet ripped from its foundations by Tuesday's avalanche in the French Alps that claimed 10 lives. It emerged yesterday.

Mike Cooper, 43, from Rochdale, who has worked as a trail guide in Chamonix for 12 years, used a sledgehammer to smash through eight inches of concrete and then squeezed through the hole to reach the survivors who were buried beneath 10 ft of snow in the village of Le Tour near here.

"I think it is miraculous that they survived unscathed in a room which had been almost

inverted, pushed 100 yards down the mountain and crushed to smithereens," he said. "The scariest part was all the broken glass and electrical wires."

Mr Cooper was one of dozens of volunteers who worked through the night in an attempt to find survivors. "I saw rescuers dragging dead bodies out of the snow. There was one house where an entire family were killed. It was very sad. The rescuers were local people who were digging out their own friends. They would stop, shed a tear, then just go on digging like robots," he said.

As the search continued yesterday, the crew of the new James Bond film was drafted



Mike Cooper: rescuer

in to help. A unit of fire and medical workers was preparing for filming on *The World Is Not Enough*, when the avalanche struck at 2.40pm on

Tuesday. "They are all specialists and we have lent them to the city," said Michael Wilson, the film's producer.

Last night 23 survivors had been pulled from the rubble and snow. Only one, a French boy aged 12, was seriously injured. Philippe Pathoux, 40, a fire services commander, described pulling the boy to safety in the early hours of yesterday morning.

"The whole house had collapsed. The little boy was lying under a plank wearing a T-shirt. His mother was lying a few metres in front of him. She was dead. His father who was lying nearby was also dead. The boy was suffering from hypothermia and was barely conscious. If it had not been for

that plank, he would certainly have also died, suffocated by the snow," he said.

"Dr Bernard Mignot, of Chamonix Hospital, said the boy was out of danger and described him as "the miracle of the avalanche".

Meanwhile, the body of a British man who went missing on Tuesday while skiing off-piste in Courchevel was found by rescuers yesterday afternoon. The 28-year-old, who has not been named, is thought to be the sixth Briton to die in avalanches in the Alps in the past ten days.

A British volunteer, Victor Saunders, 43, from Banff, who is one of Britain's top veteran mountaineers and has worked as a mountain guide in Argen-

tiere for two years, described the wreckage left in the avalanche's wake at Chamonix.

"It was an extraordinary scene. I saw one chalet which had drifted at least 100 yards from its foundations," he said.

Yesterday the sky over Chamonix was a perfect picture postcard blue. Only the police road blocks and circling helicopters contradicted this deceptively peaceful scene.

"There would only have been a second of fear. Death comes very fast in an avalanche. They wouldn't have known what happened," said Captain Jean-Claude Gin, the leader of the rescue operation.

Skiers undeterred, page 5

Olympic scandal spreads wider

More than 20 per cent of the 115-person membership of the International Olympic Committee are now implicated in the "gifts-for-votes" Salt Lake City Winter Games scandal. Yesterday ten more members were linked to the affair which involves hundreds of thousands of pounds of perks for IOC members.... Page 16

New Bill targets single mothers

Single mothers will have to attend interviews with Benefit Agency staff soon after their babies are born or risk losing all their state payments. Alastair Darling, the Social Security Secretary, described the measures in the Welfare Reform Bill as harsh but justifiable.... Page 12

Hearts removed

The hearts of more than 170 children who died at the Bristol Royal Infirmary were kept for educational purposes without the consent of their parents, who were said to be horrified that they were buried without their hearts.... Page 6

Spain threatens Rock road and air traffic

BY DOMINIC SEARLE IN GIBRALTAR AND MICHAEL BINYON, DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

GIBRALTAR was yesterday thrown back to the siege of Franco's days when Spain announced that it would ban all drivers with a Gibraltar licence from its roads and threatened to stop all flights to the Rock across its territory.

Traffic across the Gibraltar frontier with Spain was at a virtual standstill, with delays of up to six hours as officials throttled the flow. Within hours of the Spanish announcement, a driver was turned back by Spanish police who refused to recognise his licence.

Britain reacted sharply and swiftly. The Foreign Office denounced the Spanish proposals to bar overflights, saying that it was "extraordinary and unprecedented" for a European Union member to impose such a ban on a fellow EU member.

It also issued a reminder to Madrid that under EU law, each state is obliged to recog-

nise the driving licence of a fellow state under the terms of the Second Driving Licence Requirement.

The sudden worsening of relations came after an agreement signed last week between Gibraltar and local Spanish fishermen which infuriated Spain.

An angry and deeply embarrassed Abel Matutes, the Spanish Foreign Minister, announced the new restrictions to the Spanish Parliament as part of a "panoply of possible measures" intended to put pressure on Gibraltar.

He made clear that Spain was particularly annoyed with Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, for backing the agreement. Señor Matutes claimed that Britain had failed to stand by a verbal agreement on fishing around the Rock reached between himself and Mr Cook. "We have been the victims of broken promises by a friend and ally," he said.

Mr Cook may try to telephone the Spanish Foreign Minister within the next day or two to resolve the widening row. He and Señor Matutes tried on at least seven occasions to phone each other last week, but never got through. Each was using a mobile phone while travelling. The Spanish minister insists that he is still trying to reach Mr Cook, but has made no effort to do so from a land line.

Peter Caruana, Gibraltar's Chief Minister, said last night: "Spain appears to be implementing its threatened campaign of attrition against British Gibraltar."

Mr Caruana added: "A blockade is a gross breach of EU law."

Britain's argument last night that the agreement at the end of the year on Gibraltar's independence was a "pacta sunt servanda" — Mr Cook's phrase for "pacta sunt servanda" — "We do not



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Declaration on human rights — for chimps

BY NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

NEW ZEALAND could be the first country in the world to give the great apes "human" rights that could be enforced by a court.

A group of 38 lawyers, scientists and philosophers has submitted a new clause to a Bill going through Parliament which would give gorillas, chimpanzees and orang-utans the right to life, the right not to suffer cruel or degrading treatment and the right not to take part in all but the most benign of experiments. Anyone who believed a

great ape was being mistreated would have the right to intervene — although that is an unlikely scenario since there are only 34 great apes in the country, all of which are well cared-for.

"The idea is to set a precedent that other countries can follow," Dr David Perry, a biologist from Massey University in Palmerston North, said.

The campaign to acknowledge that apes have rights has been led by the Great Ape Project, which has also petitioned the United Nations to issue a declaration containing the same provisions that the New Zealand group pro-

poses, plus the right not to be imprisoned "without due legal process".

But many biologists fear that once apes have rights, it will not be long before rats do, too. Frans de Waal, chief of the Yerkes Regional Primate Research Center in Atlanta, Georgia, said: "If you argue for rights on the basis of consistency between us and the great apes, then you have to argue consistency between apes and monkeys and so on, until eventually even the lab rat wins rights. After all, dogs can form deep emotional attachments and cats seem to have distinct personalities."

Peter Singer, a philosopher at Monash University in Melbourne who founded the Great Ape Project, said there was no reason not to give chimpanzees rights: "There is no logical reason for the broadening of moral concern to cease with humans."

Mr Singer has argued that apes such as the chimpanzee — which shares 98 per cent of the same genes as human beings — should be granted the same rights as intellectually disabled children. But opponents of the campaign argue that apes are still fundamentally different from human beings.

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Railway firms under fire for late trains

By ARTHUR LEATHLEY, TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

ONLY one of Britain's 25 train companies qualified for top marks yesterday under a new grading system designed to shame the worst performers on the rail network.

For the first time, train operators have been given grades between A and E, depending on their performance over the last year.

Ministers and rail regulators say that a simplified system of marking performance is needed to expose companies that fail to improve their punctuality and reliability.

Only the eight-mile-long Island Line on the Isle of Wight was able to achieve an A grade for both punctuality and the number of cancellations.

All 25 firms were given a grade according to both the number of trains delayed and the number cancelled. An overall grade was then awarded, based on the lower of the two

scores. John O'Brien, the rail franchising director who compiled the grading system, admitted that some companies had suffered "rough justice" in the way they were graded but insisted that improvements needed to be made.

Mr O'Brien confirmed the findings of a survey by *The Times* which showed last week that the majority of routes in Britain had suffered a fall in punctuality during 1998. He said that punctuality remained the major problem for train companies, with 37 of the 68 route groups worsening. "Punctuality remains poor and these results are not good enough," said Mr O'Brien yesterday.

But when Mr O'Brien put Silverlink Trains at the bottom of his league table, he must have allowed himself a wry smile, for the company, which runs commuter services into

London, takes him to work each day from his home in Berkhamstead.

He has not disguised his frustration as a fare-paying passenger at the quality of service that caused huge disruption to his journeys to and from work last September and October.

John Reid, the Transport Minister, said: "Once again performance figures are disappointing. Passengers are getting a poor service and this is unacceptable."

Dr Reid and John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, are staging a public "rail summit" on February 25, at which train operators and Railtrack, the track and signalling company, must put forward plans to reduce delays.

James Gordon, director general of the Association of Train Operating Companies, said: "Punctuality is proving a hard nut to crack in the face of unprecedented growth." Passenger numbers have risen at some seven per cent each year since privatisation.

Train companies yesterday criticised the latest system of grading performance as too vague in offering only a "snapshot" of current performance, without comparing with previous results. The tables showed Virgin's CrossCountry line had the poorest marks for punctuality while ScotRail had the best.

The shake-up in the way that train operators' performance is published also includes, for the first time, greater details of the number of trains run. The new information suggests that some 50,000 peak-time trains - one in six of the total - are delayed each month.

The Central Rail Users' Consultative Committee said the performance by companies on some routes was "truly awful" and that performance was not improving despite incentives.

Commentary, page 27
Reform urged, page 30



Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, gets to grips yesterday with a battering ram used by police against drug dealers in his Livingstone constituency

Spain bars Rock cars

Continued from page 1

not want this to become a great battle between us and the Spanish Government."

So intense were General Franco's threat against the Rock in 1967 that Harold Wilson, Prime Minister, had military contingency plans prepared for an invasion. Such a move is unthinkable today but more petty measures now seem probable.

The first wave came in 1967 when access to Spain became limited for Gibraltarians and oxygen supplies for the local hospitals were cut off. Even altar wine for the predominantly Catholic population was refused and as 1969 approached female and later male labour were withdrawn access to the Rock. When the "don't go" finally slammed closed for 16 years in July 1969

only the dead were allowed free passage.

Telephone and postal services were cut off. So severe were air restrictions around the Rock that aircraft, both military and civilian, were forced to approach over the centre of the bay of Gibraltar and make a sharp turn onto the narrow runway. These restrictions were eventually relaxed.

Britain yesterday rejected Spain's complaint to the EU Commission last month that Gibraltar had failed to put into law 51 directives. It told the Commission that 31 of these directives had become Gibraltar law. Of the remaining 20, seven were not applicable because Gibraltar was outside the customs union, two were irrelevant to the Rock and a further seven were in the final stages of transposition into draft legislation.

Amy's strange adventure in Lucky Tie's den



POLITICAL SKETCH



How did it look to Amy? Tony Blair was observed yesterday at Prime Minister's Questions by a special guest, Amy, 14, from Hertfordshire, had phoned in while Mr Blair was appearing on *This Morning* with Richard and Judy last week to tell us about his wife's swimsuits and Glenn Hoddle. Blair's propagandists, their eye on the main chance, arranged for Amy to be carted in to Westminster to watch the PM joust.

Poor girl. She could have been listening to Cleopatra CDs on her Walkman. Instead she chose a crowd of jeering middle-aged men with soup-stained ties. The child is unhelpful.

When first she entered the Strangers' Gallery, ushered in by inexpressible men in black ties, the half she saw was half empty. A grey-haired lady with the air of a head teacher was sitting in a sort of ornamental bus-shelter at one end, keeping discipline. A crowd arrived - and in walked Amy's new friend, the Prime Minister, wearing his "lucky" tie (silver, with green blobs) and an insane grin.

For no apparent reason a man began to rant about land reform in the Highlands while Blair tried not to look bored. What did Amy make of this?

"William Hague" announced the lady in the bus-shelter. A youngish man, almost completely bald, with a Yorkshire accent, got up. Something seemed to have upset him. He started shouting about the Foreign Office being an old banger. Mr Baldy was plainly dejected.

But now Mr Lucky Tie came over all queer. He puffed and he'd and looked sick as a parrot. Baldy shouted even louder - about customs raids. Lucky Tie's grin faded, then faded, as Baldy went ballistic, hurling abuse, questions and sneering jokes. While those behind him screamed "Hear hear!" and "Ha ha!" and those behind Blair shouted "Rubbish!"

and "No!" and the bus shelter lady screamed "Order!"

All at once, Baldy subsided. A man from Cheshire told Lucky Tie something about the millennium bug that he seemed to know already.

A tall Scout-leader type asked two questions, about arms exports and Africa. Lucky Tie seemed unwilling to answer them, so he answered a different question. "Bye-bye Paddy!" shouted an elderly man, in a rude way. What was Amy making of this?

A gangling fellow with swivelling eyes boomed out something complicated about illegitimacy and marriage. The man's friends, sitting around him, looked embarrassed. Lucky Tie did not seem to want to answer this either. Everyone started shouting.

From her bus-shelter the lady in buckled shoes and tights flew into a rage and began to scream and shout. This may have startled Amy, but in the chamber they behaved as though it was completely normal.

Then Baldy leapt up again and yelled something about tax. Lucky Tie got crosser and crosser but avoided the question. Baldy shouted that he knew the answer anyway - and gave it. Amy will have wondered why, in that case, he had asked the question. Enraged, Lucky Tie worked himself up into a cry of "Tory boom and bust!" at which those behind him gave a terrific cheer.

Baldy subsided again. An elderly gentleman from Totnes invited Lucky Tie to accompany him mackerel fishing, adding that they wouldn't catch any. Lucky Tie said "Thanks" but he was getting tired of invitations from this fellow. And, within minutes, they had all rushed out of the chamber.

Amy will have departed too. On Monday she told, the Prime Minister that she was interested in politics. If she is still interested in politics, she needs her head set to.

Amy Allen: invited to watch Westminster joust



TRAIN OPERATOR PERFORMANCES				
Train operator	Average number trains cancelled over 4 miles	Punctuality average	Reliability average	Grade
CATEGORY A				
Island Line	4,714	95.0	95.0	A
CATEGORY B				
ScotRail	44,203	93.9	93.9	B
Merseyrail	13,274	93.3	93.3	B
Central (excluding Central)	11,039	93.1	93.1	B
Anglia	5,626	92.0	92.0	B
WAGN	25,661	92.2	92.2	B
Great Eastern	17,746	90.8	90.8	B
Great Western	4,415	90.1	90.1	B
CATEGORY C				
LTS Rail	6,636	94.0	94.0	C
Northern	32,240	94.5	94.5	C
Wales & West	13,537	91.2	91.2	C
Connex South Central	32,407	90.0	90.0	C
Thameslink	7,462	90.9	90.9	C
Midland Main Line	1,465	90.8	90.8	C
South West	37,086	90.5	90.5	C
Great North Eastern	7,286	89.3	89.3	C
Chiltern	4,854	88.4	88.4	C
West Coast	13,726	88.9	88.9	C
CATEGORY D				
North Western	35,428	90.2	90.2	D
Coventry	1,051	89.3	89.3	D
Great Western	3,511	89.5	89.5	D
Connex South Eastern	32,407	89.5	89.5	D
Thames Valley	15,456	89.7	89.7	D
Great Eastern	2,238	82.3	82.3	D
CATEGORY E				
Sheffield	10,966	81.2	81.2	E

Punctuality grades: A - 95.5 and above, B - 90.0 - 95.4, C - 85.0 - 89.9, D - 80.0 - 84.9, E - below 80.0. Reliability (journeys completed) grades: A - 95.5 and above, B - 90.0 - 95.4, C - 85.0 - 89.9, D - 80.0 - 84.9, E - below 80.0.

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but where will they be next year?

A 'good fella', but America is still vague about Hague

FROM DAMIAN WHITWORTH IN WASHINGTON

WILLIAM HAGUE arrived in America last night to meet senior Republicans. The first item on his agenda should be to explain who he is.

The highlight is a meeting with George W. Bush, Governor of Texas and son of former President Bush. A favourite for the next presidential election, Mr Bush was just a little confused about Mr Hague.

Asked about his visitor, Mr Bush said "Who? Alexander?" apparently referring to Alexander Haig, Richard Nixon's chief of staff and a former Nato commander. When a reporter said no, William, the Governor rallied but appeared to think that the Leader of the Opposition held some sort of government position.

Mr Bush, who has yet to declare a run for the White House in 2000, said that Sir

Christopher Meyer, the British Ambassador to Washington, had visited him last week and they had talked about "Minister" Hague. "He told me that he's a good fella" and a leader in your country. I'm looking forward to his visit."

Asked what they would talk about Mr Bush said: "I'm not absolutely sure. I'm honoured that he would choose to come."

Prompted that Mr Hague is keen to learn about the brand of "compassionate conservatism" that has made him a presidential frontrunner, he talked enthusiastically about his policies but said that he would tell Mr Hague: "First you have to win. You've got to be in a position to implement policy."

Mr Hague, who arrived in New York last night and was due in Washington to-

day, will not visit Tony Blair's close friend President Clinton.

Because his trip has the misfortune of coinciding with the culmination of the impeachment proceedings, he is expected to meet only relatively junior members of the Republican leadership on Capitol Hill.

At Washington's National Press Club, he will make a speech about what British and American conservatives can learn from each other, just as every journalist in the capital is consumed by the end of the trial.

Accompanied by his wife, Fiona, he will see Rudolph Giuliani, the Mayor of New York and Henry Kissinger, the former Secretary of State, as well as conservative leaders in Canada.

Blair aims to break Ulster deadlock

By PHILIP WEBSTER
POLITICAL EDITOR

A PERSONAL push to break the deadlock over decommissioning of terrorist weapons is being planned by Tony Blair.

Government sources disclosed yesterday that the Prime Minister could return to Stormont for a new round of talks if the Ulster Unionists and Sinn Féin fail to reach a compromise in time for next month's deadline for the transfer of legislative powers from London to Belfast.

Mr Blair was present for the day and night negotiations that led to the signing of the Good Friday Agreement.

Parties at the Northern Ireland Assembly are due to begin a major debate on Monday when proposals for the creation of ten ministerial departments and six cross-border institutions are likely to be endorsed.

However, the issue of IRA decommissioning is expected to then bring deadlock and there are fears that the sides will be nowhere near meeting the March 10 deadline.

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Marquess puts paid to wife's open invitation

HE is an aristocratic City financier and heir to a large chunk of Gloucestershire. She is a former actress who dresses in second-hand clothes and has devoted herself to the environmental protest movement.

So married life was never going to be dull for the Marquess of Worcester and his Marchioness, formerly known as the actress Tracy Ward. And although Lord Worcester did not join his wife in the latest eco-action he was usually prepared to give moral support.

Until now, that is. On Sunday, Lady Worcester appeared on a television discussion programme and seemed to issue an open invitation to every "greenie, gypsy and New Age traveller" to set up camp on her father-in-law's Badminton estate. The scenes afterwards in the kitchen at the couple's rambling Dower House on the edge of the Duke of Beaufort's 52,000-acre estate can only be imagined.

Lady Worcester, 40, whose husband will one day inherit the land and its 40-room state home, admitted that idealism had got the better of her during a debate on local television.

Having defended the residents of Tinker's Bubble, an "eco-village" in Somerset, she was asked whether she would have any objection if they decided to put up their tents and wigwags at Badminton. Lady Worcester replied: "I would

**Husband said
eco-activists
would not be
welcome, writes
Simon de
Bruxelles**

love it. They are nice people. They understand about sustainable living."

Yesterday, however, the mother-of-three said she wanted to "clarify" that statement. "I would love them to come and set up in my back yard, but it's just not possible."

"For concerned Badminton residents and farmers my Utopian community housing has been rejected categorically by Harry, who will not be selling any land to accommodate my dreams."

It is not the first time the couple have clashed over Lady Worcester's environmental ambitions. She is on record as saying her 46-year-old Eton-educated husband drew the line at using "recycled" lavatory paper. The marquess also vetoed plans to create a compost lavatory so that household waste could fertilise their roses and the vegetable garden. This was, however, of an entirely different order of magnitude. An apologetic Lady Worcester

said: "This isn't a case of 'not in my back yard'. 'I would love them to come and create a blueprint for sustainable living here. We are like-minded people. But I do not own a single acre of land and Harry is not selling any and does not want any development here. We have never needed to discuss it before now but I have to make my comments clear."

"I think most people would not object to these people living close to their homes if they legitimately bought the land to live in harmony with it."

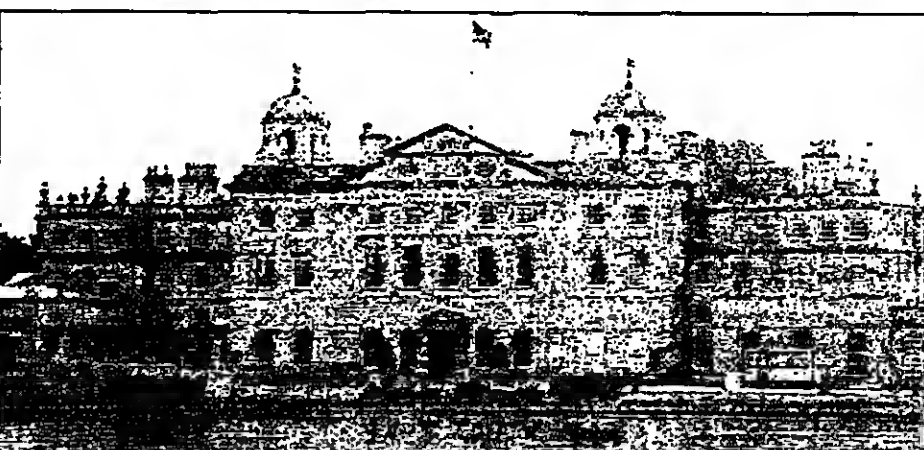
The couple, who married in 1987, have two sons Bobby, ten, and Xan, three, and a seven-year-old daughter Bella. Lady Worcester, known as Tracy Worcester in the environmental movement, is a trustee of Friends of the Earth, the Soil Association and Transport 2000. She is also an associate director of the International Society for Ecology and Culture, president of both Community Action and the Good Gardeners' Association. She was a leading campaigner against the Newbury bypass and is a familiar face at environmental protests.

In the 1980s Tracy Ward, whose sister is the actress Rachel Ward, was better known for her part in the cheesy television series *Cuts*. Eyes and her role as Miss Scarlet in a short-lived television version of *Cluedo*. Last year she stood for selection as a Green Party candidate in the European elections but withdrew over her refusal to condemn fox-hunting. The Beaufort Hunt reigns at the heart of the hunting establishment.

The marquess, Henry John Fitzroy Somerset, known to friends as Bunter, the heir to the 11th Duke of Beaufort, prefers to keep a lower profile despite his £6m frame. His father's estate hosts the annual three-day Badminton Horse Trials every May. It attracts an international field of riders and nearly half-a-million spectators — and definitely no wigwags.



The Marchioness and Marquess with the Beaufort Hunt and, below, Badminton House, now safe from "greenies, gypsies and New Age travellers"



PC told stewardess 'don't drive in my county'

By CAROLINE SIGLEY

A POLICE constable flashed his warrant card at a senior air stewardess and warned her never to drive through his county after she refused to serve him a bottle of gin. A court was told yesterday.

PC Richard Perrett, 26, is also alleged to have told three police officers not to cross the border into West Yorkshire after they met him off a flight from Florida to Manchester in February last year.

The threat followed drunken, abusive and bawdy behaviour by PC Perrett, his father, Inspector David Perrett, and Peter Beck, a publican, Manchester Crown Court was told. All three men from Halifax deny drunkenness on board the Britannia Airways flight.

Angela Meddings, a cabin manager, said PC Perrett had asked for a bottle of gin and ten cans of tonic. He was told that he could buy the gin but not consume it on board. She said: "He then produced a warrant card and said words to the effect of 'Come on, we're all on the same team'."

She told him it was not Britannia Airways policy to allow passengers to drink from litre bottles, to which he allegedly replied: "Never come to West Yorkshire or never drive through West Yorkshire."

After complaints, the men had their passports confiscated. They were also escorted from the plane by police.

The court was told how PC Perrett had told PC Terry Cornforth, PC Ian Hambleton and Inspector Brian Huley that they should not drive or pass through West Yorkshire.

PC Hambleton said that "the whole plane erupted in cheers and applause as we chucked them off". All three officers said that the defendants were unsteady on their feet and had slurred speech.

Inspector Perrett, 49, who has served with the West Yorkshire force for 28 years, denied gyrating to scenes from *The Full Monty*. "I wasn't drunk. I expect that as a group we may have been jovial."

The hearing continues. (PA News)



Getty: escapes US taxes

Getty son gets Irish passport for £1m

By AUDREY MAGILL
IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

TARA GETTY, son of the oil heir Sir John Paul Getty, has obtained an Irish passport after investing £1 million in an Irish company, it emerged yesterday. His new nationality allows him to circumvent American tax laws on income and inheritance.

Mr Getty, 29, who married a farmer's daughter from Surrey last year, is the third member of his extended family to buy an Irish passport under the controversial "passports for investment" scheme. The system was abolished last April after it emerged that it was being abused by Irish politicians. Mr Getty's application was one of about ten outstanding to be processed.

His cousins, Mark Harris Getty and Christopher Ronald Getty, bought Irish passports in 1995, investing at least £2 million in Irish companies. None lives permanently in Ireland. Tara Getty will continue to live in South Africa with his wife Jessica, 26.

About 145 Irish passports have been sold to foreigners since the scheme was started by Charles Haughey, the former Prime Minister, in 1988. It generated about £90 million. But it remains unclear if all the money was invested in the Exchequer or if some was retained for politicians' private use.

A tribunal investigating payments to Mr Haughey is examining all the files on the passport scheme. A government source said the investigation was unlikely to involve the Gettys, who met all the criteria and properly invested their money in Irish companies.



Tinker's Bubble: Marchioness invited them all home

Couple on run from family's hit men

By ROLAND WATSON
AND PAUL WILKINSON

A DEATH sentence imposed by a British Asian family on their daughter and her husband is still troubling the couple six years after they eloped.

Ann Cryer, the Labour MP for Keighley, told the Commons yesterday that the parents of Zena Briggs (not her real name) had hired hit men to track her down because she refused to marry a first cousin who lived in Pakistan.

During a debate on women's rights, Mrs Cryer told MPs that Mrs Briggs and her husband lived in perpetual fear of the family. Mrs Cryer also told of another woman who was on the run because her mother had threatened to kill her after she fled from an abusive husband.

"Our Asian women constituents are perfectly entitled to expect the same human rights that are afforded to us... They are also entitled to expect us to help them to enjoy those human rights," Mrs Cryer said.

In reply, Mike O'Brien, the junior Home Office minister, said there was no evidence that arranged marriages were less successful than others, but said: "The Government is aware of the issues of forced marriages. The victims are very small in number but their voice will not be ignored."

Rembrandt self-portrait not the whole picture

By DALYA ALBERGE, ARTS CORRESPONDENT

A PAINTING of Rembrandt was always praised as a masterpiece among his self-portraits. The fact that it was not quite in his usual style was said to add to its importance.

At the same time, a somewhat rougher painting in another gallery was held to be just a copy. But not any more.

Yesterday the more famous painting was declared to be the copy, while the rougher version emerged as the true work of the master. The switch in attitude by scholars was reported by Neil MacGregor, the Director of the National Gallery, which is planning to include both images as a draw to its exhibition of Rembrandt self-portraits this summer.

The demoted painting from 1629 comes from the Mauritshuis in the Hague. He said:

"It was long regarded as one of the supreme early portraits. It is almost certainly a copy." Doubts were first raised in 1991 by a German scholar, Claus Grimm, but his view was discounted as the painting was considered so fine.

David Bomford, the National Gallery's senior restorer of paintings, recalled how "everybody said, 'What a quaint idea'." The quality of the painting "seduced people", he said. Even though the style is not entirely in keeping with Rembrandt's hand, scholars were convinced that it was a masterpiece that "stands alone" among his works.

In retrospect, Mr Bomford said, scholars should have questioned its uniqueness further. The other picture, in the Germanisches National Museum in Nuremberg, was regarded as "a rough copy, interesting but not terribly important", although the rough, granular handling of the paint was more typical of Rembrandt. What clinched the Grimm theory was scientific analysis — infra-red reflectography, conducted by the Mauritshuis — and bringing together the two versions for the first time in Nuremberg.

Tests on the Mauritshuis portrait revealed underdrawing that a copyist would do if setting down a composition. Dr Bomford said that the Mauritshuis was "not in the least bit dismayed", but Nuremberg is "extremely pleased".

Peter van der Ploeg, a senior curator at the Mauritshuis, said they were now researching who painted their picture. Among the contenders are artists who worked in Rembrandt's studio, such as Gerard Dou or Jan Lievens. They are considered masters in their own right. Rembrandt used to get his pupils to copy his self-portraits as exercises.

The exhibition from June 9 to September 5 is jointly organised by the National Gallery and the Mauritshuis. The National Gallery has urged Parliament to push through legislation allowing the Burrell Collection to lend a Rembrandt to the Mauritshuis, where the exhibition will be shown from September. Burrell's will stipulated there be no loans abroad.



Less is more: the copy, left, and the rougher original



'Asylo': a singular new currency

By DOMINIC KENNEDY

A BLACK MARKET has been created in supermarket tokens issued to asylum-seekers to buy basics, such as food, with the refugees selling them for cash to buy non-essential items such as cigarettes. The Home Office, which is planning to replace cash payments to refugee families with shelters and food tokens, was warned that the fraud in tokens could eventually reach £20 million a year.

The problem is so great in Kent, where there are 2,600 asylum-seekers, that the joke among refugee organisations is that Britain has its own single European currency — the "Asylo". The asylum-seekers sell their vouchers, with the exchange rate being 60p cash for every £1 in tokens. Middlemen sell them on for 90p.

Vouchers are central to the Government's policy of being faster, firmer and fairer in dealing with applications for asylum. From 2001 all refugees should be told within two months whether their application has been accepted, with an appeal completed in another four. During that time they will get free housing, and vouchers instead of money for essentials.

A voucher economy has already emerged because councils are statutorily required to feed and shelter destitute single adult asylum-seekers, but forbidden from giving them money. Town halls have created a patchwork of voucher systems. Under most of them, the vouchers are issued in the name of a shop, such as a branch of a particular supermarket, but with nothing to identify the user. Asylum-seeking families with children now get money to buy essentials such as milk and nappies, but the Government proposes to make them use vouchers too.

Martyn Ayre, a social services official at Kent County Council, told a Local Government Association seminar yesterday that the vouchers were an administrative nightmare.

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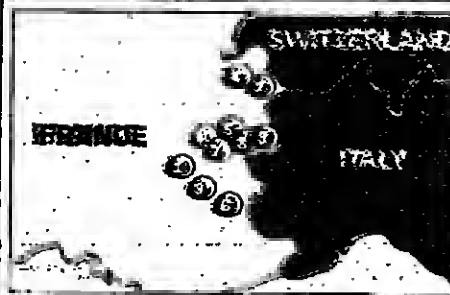
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Avalanches fail to deter skiers

THE RESORTS: CONDITIONS AND TRAVELLING



RESORT	Snow	Avalanches?	Lifts	Roads	Rail	Station	Airport
1. Alpbach	Very good	X	X	X	X	Brugg	Munich, Innsbruck
2. Ischgl	Very good	X	X	X	X	Landeck	Innsbruck
3. Kitzbühel	Very good	X	X	X	X	Langen	Salzburg, Munich
4. Lech	Very good	X	X	X	X	Langen	Innsbruck, Zurich
5. Mayrhofen	Very good	X	X	X	X	Jenbach	Munich, Innsbruck
6. Nendau	Excellent	X	X	X	X	Wörgl	Innsbruck, Salzburg
7. Obertauern	Heavy	X	X	X	X	Otztal	Innsbruck
8. Schladming	Very good	X	X	X	X	Innsbruck	Salzburg
9. Seckau	Very good	X	X	X	X	Munich, Salzburg, Innsbruck	Innsbruck, Zurich, Munich
10. St Anton	Very good	X	X	X	X	Innsbruck	Innsbruck, Zurich, Munich

RESORT	Snow	Avalanches?	Lifts	Roads	Rail	Station	Airport
1. Alpe d'Huez	Very good	X	X	X	X	Grenoble	Lyon, Grenoble
2. Chamonix	Very good	X	X	X	X	Grenoble	Geneva
3. Deux Alpes	Very good	X	X	X	X	Grenoble	Grenoble, Lyons
4. Plaine	Very good	X	X	X	X	Alpe	Geneva
5. La Plagne	Very good	X	X	X	X	Brancion	Lyon, Turin, Grenoble
6. S. Chavillat	Very good	X	X	X	X	Modane	Chambéry
7. Three Valleys	Very good	X	X	X	X	Bourg	Geneva, Chambéry
8. Tignes	Heavy	X	X	X	X	Bourg	Geneva, Chambéry
9. Val d'Isère	Heavy	X	X	X	X	Bourg	Geneva, Chambéry
10. Valmorel	Very good	X	X	X	X	Modane	Geneva, Lyons

RESORT	Snow	Avalanches?	Lifts	Roads	Rail	Station	Airport
1. Bormio	Fair	X	X	X	X	Tirano	Milan, Bergamo
2. Canazei	Fair	X	X	X	X	Milan	Milan
3. Cortina	Heavy	X	X	X	X	Chiusa	Turin, Geneva
4. Corvara	Very good	X	X	X	X	Caldo	Venice
5. Courmayeur	Heavy	X	X	X	X	Pré-Saint-Didier	Geneva, Turin
6. Livigno	Good	X	X	X	X	Tirano	Milan, Zurich, Bergamo
7. Madonna di C.	Good	X	X	X	X	Pré-Saint-Didier	Venice, Milan
8. Jausa	Very good	X	X	X	X	Duiz	Turin
9. Sassifera	Fair	X	X	X	X	Duiz	Turin
10. Bardonecchia	Fair	X	X	X	X	Innsbruck	Turin

RESORT	Snow	Avalanches?	Lifts	Roads	Rail	Station	Airport
1. Grans	Very good	X	X	X	X	Innsbruck	Ston, Geneva, Zurich
2. Davos	Very good	X	X	X	X	Davos Dorf	Zurich
3. Grindelwald	Very good	X	X	X	X	Innsbruck	Zurich
4. Klosters	Very good	X	X	X	X	Klosters	Zurich
5. Mürren	Very good	X	X	X	X	Innsbruck	Zurich, Geneva
6. St Moritz	Very good	X	X	X	X	Innsbruck	Zurich
7. Wengen	Very good	X	X	X	X	Innsbruck	Zurich, Geneva
8. Verbier	Very good	X	X	X	X	Le Châble	Geneva
9. Zermatt	New	X	X	X	X	Innsbruck	Geneva
10. Leylen	Very good	X	X	X	X	Innsbruck	Zurich, Geneva

Mother wins hearing on Scots Guards

By Audrey Magee, Ireland Correspondent

THE mother of a teenager shot dead by two Scots Guards in Belfast yesterday won the first stage of a legal bid to have the soldiers thrown out of the Army.

Jean McBride, whose 18-year-old son, Peter, was shot in the back by James Fisher and Mark Wright in 1992, received permission to apply for a judicial review of the Ministry of Defence decision to allow them to remain in the Army.

Granting the permission in the Belfast High Court, Mr Justice Kerr warned Mrs McBride that she was facing "a very difficult case".

Fisher and Wright were released on licence last year after serving six years for murdering McBride. They said that they believed he had a coffee jar bomb, but evidence emerged during the trial showing that he had not. The pair were released after a campaign by supporters including the independent MP Martin Bell, and allowed to return to their Army regiments.

Mrs McBride said that she was delighted with yesterday's decision. "Peter's death isn't getting any easier after almost seven years. But if I get my day in court I'll be happy," she said.

Paul O'Connor, solicitor

for the McBride family, said: "We want these soldiers dismissed from the Army and the Government to accept that the judgment of the court when they were convicted of murder was the right one and that a small group of people within the armed forces does not have the right to go against that."

It is the first time that such an application has been granted against the MoD, which intends to challenge the move.

Under Queen's Regulations, members of the Armed Forces convicted of murder and other custodial offences must be dismissed unless the Army Board finds that exceptional circumstances exist.



Mrs McBride wants the soldiers sacked

Many pistes closed but Britons still flying in

By Joanna Bale

SKI tour operators were inundated with calls yesterday from clients seeking reassurances about safety in the Alps after a series of deaths in avalanches.

Despite the risks, however, there has been an upsurge in bookings from people hoping to take advantage of excellent snow conditions once dangerous areas have been cleared.

Many are parents aiming to take their children skiing over half-term next week. Lawrence Hicks, sales and public relations manager for Inghams, said: "Those going out this weekend will find a lot of pistes closed because of avalanche dangers, but we are hoping things will improve as the week progresses."

"We have had lots of calls from anxious people and we are telling them to observe local guidelines, ski in groups and not to ski off-piste."

Andrew Dunn, managing director of Ski Scott Dunn, said: "We have had hundreds of people calling us for guidance. We have banned all our staff from skiing off-piste and

have put out memos to guests advising them not to ski off-piste, and certainly not without a guide."

He added: "With all this snow, we are on for a brilliant end-of-season, so there has been a great deal of interest and I expect to fill everything from February 20 onwards."

In Austria, the army airlifted supplies to about 25,000 tourists stranded in Lech and St Anton after snow blocked roads. Although many resorts, such as Chamonix, were closed yesterday because of a high risk of avalanches, work was under way to clear unstable snow using explosives.

Jean-Claude Foudot, of Ski Weekend, which specialises in short breaks and tailor-made holidays, said: "Once everything is cleared, the skiing will be fantastic. Even though there are problems in Chamonix at the moment we are still advising people to go because things will be sorted out very quickly."

Laura Zachary, of the Ski Club of Great Britain, said it had been inundated with calls.

She said: "People are worried about whether it is safe to go. We are telling them not to cancel their holidays because although some resorts are closed, they will be cleared very quickly and the skiing is going to be fantastic."

"We are telling them not to go off-piste, but to stick to the pistes which are open. The authorities do not open pistes unless they are safe from avalanches. Those with children tend to stick to nursery runs which are lower down and extremely safe."

"If you wish to go off-piste you should use guides and avalanche transceivers. We do not allow any of our guides to go off-piste in grade 4 or 5 warnings, which are the most serious."

Although more snow is forecast at the weekend, it will be much lighter than recent snowfalls and will be interspersed with bright spells.

Ms Zachary added: "People should not panic about more snow being forecast because it will be nothing like we have had already."

Port accused of selling its soul to the Spanish

By Russell Jenkins

A ONCE-GREAT fishing port has been accused of "selling its soul" by allowing 34 Spanish boats to buy into its fish producers' organisation.

The partnership between La Coruña and Fleetwood, Lancashire, has been condemned by fishermen around Britain as "sleeping with the enemy".

Fleetwood, where 700 work in the fishing industry compared with 6,000 a quarter of a century ago, has been forced out of the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations. But skippers in the port insist the marriage of convenience with traditional maritime rivals is necessary to save the port from oblivion.

As part of the deal, the Spanish promised to land a sizeable part of their catch in the

Fylde port to boost its flagging market. But for the first six weeks they have instead returned to their home port with cargoes of hake, megrim and monk fish.

Mark Hamer, chief executive of Fleetwood Fish Producers' Organisation, said that short-term unpopularity was a price worth paying for the port's survival. The Spaniards' joining fee saved the organisation from bankruptcy, paid for a £4,500 office refit and a secretary, provided funds to buy in quota and freed local trawlers to target species like cod and haddock, unpopular with housewives in Madrid.

"We have a terrible time. If we had not taken these steps, we would have been in an odd state," he said.



Fleetwood hopes the Spanish can help revive its economy

Ruinous end to row over land strip

By John Aston

A DISPUTE between neighbours over a small strip of land worth £200 ended yesterday with a couple facing the prospect of selling their Cotswolds retirement home to pay a huge legal bill. The ruinous row over where the boundary lay lasted 18 years.

It was a disastrous end for George Powling, 80, and his wife Elizabeth, 76, when the Court of Appeal ruled for Douglas Woods, 78. It means that the couple must leave their five-bedroom house at Brimscombe, Gloucestershire.

Mrs Powling said: "It has been more than a nightmare — if that is possible. We will definitely have to sell the house to pay the court costs. "It is all over a tiny piece of land which was only worth £200 when we first had trouble. It is crazy. I can tell you. Our life savings are already gone. Now we shall have to find up to another £100,000 by the time we have finished paying court costs."

The court yesterday allowed an appeal by Mr Woods and overturned a Gloucester County Court ruling in April 1997 that the Powlings owned the disputed 12ft-by-60ft strip by an old orchard drystone wall. Mr Woods was entitled only to £2 damages for trespass. The Powlings must pay 75 per cent of legal costs and Mr Woods the remainder. — PA News



Hospital kept hearts of 170 dead children

THE hearts of more than 170 children who died after surgery at the Bristol Royal Infirmary were removed and kept for "educational purposes" without their parents' consent, it was disclosed yesterday.

Many of the children died as a result of a series of operations that led to three surgeons being found guilty of serious professional misconduct. The news that they were buried without their hearts has horrified their families.

The Bristol Children's Heart Action Group said yesterday that between 170 and 300 children's hearts had been retained after operations in the hospital over the 12 years to 1995. The hearts and other organs were preserved in formaldehyde without the knowledge of parents after autopsies.

The United Bristol Healthcare NHS Trust yesterday confirmed that organs were retained for "further examination, education or audit purposes". The trust said that it was standard practice in hospitals to retain organs without consent of the next of kin. However, it admitted this procedure appeared outdated and

Parents were not told of organ removal at the Bristol Infirmary, reports Simon de Bruxelles

the parental consent given for post-mortem examinations to be carried out on the children "was not as informed as modern standards require".

Michaela Willis, the chairwoman of the action group, said: "It was known that hearts had been retained without knowledge or consent in isolated cases, but the trust had not made us aware until now that hearts had been retained systematically. The shock and sorrow that this disclosure will cause to parents is incalculable."

Mrs Willis said that the infirmary would write to each of the parents whose child's heart had been kept within the next few days. Those whose child's heart or tissue had not

been retained would be given a personal written assurance of the fact.

Helen Rickard, whose daughter, Samantha, died in 1992 after an operation at the hospital by James Wisheart, who was struck off after the inquiry by the General Medical Council, discovered her daughter's heart had been retained after looking through medical records. "I was absolutely devastated. I thought I had buried my daughter after the operation, but then discovered she was not laid completely to rest," she said.

"If I had known that Samantha's heart had been taken out I would have insisted that it was put back in before she was buried. I am absolutely certain that at no stage was I asked for permission to use her heart for teaching or research."

The trust said yesterday that it had been contacting parents during the past few months to tell them that it had kept their children's hearts after operations between 1976 and 1995, and to ask what they wanted done with them.

Kate Birch, a spokeswoman for the trust, said: "The retention of body tissue for examina-



Michaela Willis: "The shock and sorrow that this will cause parents is incalculable"

tion, education and audit purposes has always been standard practice.

The majority of post-mortems are undertaken at the request of the coroner. All other post-mortems were undertaken with the consent of families,

but it is accepted that this consent was not as informed as modern standards require."

Nick Harvey, the Liberal Democrat MP for North Devon, said that he would table a question in the House of Commons about the retention of or-

gans without consent, and that he wanted Frank Dobson, the Health Secretary, to review the law on the matter.

"This is a disgrace that turns my stomach," Mr Harvey said. "The parents didn't even know this practice was go-

Head of inquiry accused of bias

By MARTHA LONDON

THE president of the doctors' disciplinary body was accused of bias at the opening of an appeal yesterday by one of the men struck off over heart surgery on babies.

Sir Donald Irvine, president of the General Medical Council, was accused of failing to disclose that his grandchild was being treated for a heart condition during last year's inquiry by the council into 53 heart operations on children at the Bristol Royal Infirmary.

The inquiry, of which Sir Donald was chairman, lasted seven months and was the longest and most complex it had undertaken.

John Roylance, the chief executive of the United Bristol Healthcare NHS Trust, was ordered to be struck off the medical register. He and surgeons James Wisheart and Janardan Dhasmana were found guilty of serious professional misconduct.

Opening an appeal before the judicial committee of the Privy Council on behalf of Dr Roylance, Robert

Francis QC, said that Sir Donald had "clear emotional links" with the parents in the heart babies' cases. "We would submit that there is at least an appearance of clear emotional links between the circumstances in relation to his own family and those of the other parents in these cases," he told the hearing.

Mr Francis said that the complaints about Dr Roylance all related to his actions as a manager and not as a doctor. The hearing continues. (PA News)



Irvine's grandson had a heart condition

ing on. The tragic story of babies' deaths at the infirmary just gets worse and worse. It's extremely upsetting for the parents of babies who died."

The disclosure comes six weeks before the opening of the public inquiry into the

deaths of 29 babies after heart surgery at the infirmary. Four other children were left brain damaged after operations at the hospital. The Bristol Children's Heart Action Group claims that many more children died.

Parents force inquiry into meningitis

By SIMON DE BRUXELLES, WEST OF ENGLAND CORRESPONDENT

AN OFFICIAL inquiry was ordered yesterday into the handling of the meningitis outbreak in South Wales, which has killed three people.

Jon Owen Jones, the Welsh Office Health Minister, bowed to pressure from parents concerned about the spread of the disease, which has struck 11 people in the town of Pontypridd.

Mr Jones said he was asking a hastily convened study group to report as soon as possible. He said that Ruth Hall, the Chief Medical Officer of Wales, would nominate individuals with appropriate experience and knowledge.

The National Meningitis Trust and the Meningitis Research Foundation will be asked to join the group, which will be chaired by Professor Ian Cameron, Provost and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Wales College of Medicine.

There have been 56 cases of meningitis in Wales so far this year compared with 32 in the whole of 1998.

The move follows concern over the delay in giving medical treatment to pupils at Coddylan Comprehensive School in Pontypridd. Vaccinations were not given until nine days after the death of Gareth Gould, 15.

Parents claim that the delay may have allowed seven other children to develop the illness and put others at risk. Medical

experts contend that as the vast majority of cases of meningitis are isolated instances, it would be wrong simply to dispense powerful antibiotics to everyone with whom they might have come into contact.

More than 1,700 pupils and staff at three schools attended by the victims of the Pontypridd outbreak have been vaccinated during the past few days. But parents of pupils at the Cardinal Newman Comprehensive are angry that their children have not been offered treatment after the death of a popular home economics teacher.

Fewer than half the school's 688 pupils turned up for lessons yesterday after the death of Lynne James, 55.

The Bro-Taf health authority says it has been unable to find any link between Mrs James's illness and the victims from other schools in the area, and that it is treating it as an "isolated" infection.

But yesterday it was disclosed that Joyce Davies, 66, who died on January 30, the first fatality of the outbreak, has grandchildren at the school where Mrs James taught. She lived half a mile from the Cardinal Newman school.

Doctors treating Stuart Morgan, 16, the most seriously ill victim of the meningitis outbreak, said yesterday that his condition had greatly improved.

Pupils taught to play by the book

By HANNAH BETTS

FATHERS and grandfathers backed by three Saracens rugby players set out this week to convince the boys of a Hertfordshire school that reading is not for sissies.

Boys and girls at Fleetville Infant School, St Albans, listened attentively as 50 fathers and grandfathers told stories to small groups of children.

After lunch it was the turn of the track-suited rugby players, who showed that macho men can be as keen on reading as they are on sport. Brendon Reidy, who became a father two weeks ago, said that he was looking forward to reading to his son, Lewis. "Reading opens up a whole world of adventure and it's essential that we encourage boys to become a part of that."

Peter Freeman, a parent and one of the organisers of the school reading day, turned up in his karate outfit for the event. Explaining its purpose, he said: "We all know what it's like. You come home at 7.30 in the evening and the last thing you want to do is sit down with a book. But if we don't encourage children to read now they



It never picks it up in their future lives. I want them to be able to say: 'Look there's a bloke who's six foot and who's a sportsman. If he likes reading then it must be all right'."

Anita Tullberg, the head teacher, said: "Research has shown that where there are difficult boys tend to turn off reading around the age of seven. Our goal is to build an avid generation of readers from which no child is excluded."

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Energy firms defeated over pension raid

TWO pensioners who accused the electricity industry of raiding their pension funds have won a legal battle to recover £2 billion. The ruling is expected to benefit 200,000 pensioners.

The Court of Appeal yesterday held that National Grid had acted unlawfully in taking £46.3 million in surpluses from the Electricity Supply Pension Scheme in 1992 to pay for voluntary redundancies. A similar ruling was made against National Power.

The case affects the 21 companies in the electricity supply industry and is expected to have implications for other company pension schemes. Many have generated far more money than needed to pay pensioners because investments have done so well.

Traditional "defined benefit" schemes — which pay pensioners about two thirds of final salary — are most likely to be affected. Because of its significance, the case is likely to be appealed to the House of Lords, the court was told.

The two pensioners who brought the case, David Laws, 61, and Reg Mayes, 75, former National Grid workers, criticised the employers' attempt to "drag the process out further" by appeal. They demanded that repayments be made to the funds immediately.

"We are pensioners and we want our money now," Mr Laws said. "The average widow's pension is twenty quid — these people are dying in poverty every year, we can't wait another two years or more while they go to the Lords."

The two men have been trying for six years to have the money returned. They went first to the Pensions Ombuds-

Gavin Lumsden and Christine Middap on the implications of £2bn victory by retired workers

man, who upheld their case, but the decision was overturned on appeal to the High Court in June 1997.

The pensioners then went to the Court of Appeal, which yesterday ruled that there was no provision in the scheme giving employers a unilateral power to forgo their liabilities to pay contributions.

Lords Justices Nourse, Schiemann and Brooke said that an employer owed an implied obligation of good faith to his employees. "This means that he must not, without reasonable and proper cause, conduct himself in a manner calculated or likely to destroy or seriously damage the relationship of confidence and trust between employer and employee." That obligation included a pension scheme.

The companies had argued that they could correct past overfunding by not paying contributions that had been shown not to be needed.

National Grid said after the case that it was examining the judgment. It would not be known until a court hearing in two months' time how much it would have to repay, and in the meantime it was considering whether to appeal.

Both power companies are confident that they will be able

to change the rules of the pension schemes to let them benefit from the surplus money retrospectively.

The pensioners' solicitor, Peter Woods of Stephens Innocent, said that despite the threat of an appeal to the Lords the decision was a "tremendous victory" which promised to lead to increased benefits. The case could have implications for other such funds. "The whole pensions industry is watching this case."

But Dougie Rooney of the Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union, which has 30,000 members in the power industry, said: "This is a disastrous decision."

"It could encourage companies throughout industry to replace occupational schemes with 'money purchase' schemes which leave people worse off."



David Laws celebrating the appeal court decision yesterday after he and Reg Mayes had fought a six-year campaign

BA woman withdraws revenge accusation

By ADRIAN LEE

A BRITISH Airways manager who claimed that her sacking was motivated by revenge for an office affair withdrew the allegation yesterday.

Joanne Stansfield was accused of lying about Elaine Walker, an airline disciplinary manager who carried out the dismissal last year.

Miss Stansfield, 30, of Windsor, Berkshire, had alleged that her "intimate liaison" with Pat Gaffey, a BA executive and the boyfriend of Miss Walker, played a crucial role. But on the fifth day of an employment tribunal, a lawyer for Miss Stansfield conceded that she could not prove that Miss Walker knew of the relationship when the decision was made.

Miss Stansfield claims she suffered sexual discrimination when she was sacked after a row over overtime while a senior male colleague was given a verbal warning. She was later reinstated at a lower grade.

The tribunal in Croydon, South London, has reserved judgment.

Church upset by voodoo for lovers

By PETER GLEESON

THE Church of England has criticised a men's fragrance company for hiring a "witch doctor" to cast a virility spell over its latest product range.

The voodoo doctor Bishop Lewis will today bless £2 million worth of Lynx's new fragrance, Voodoo, at a dusk ceremony at the company's Leeds headquarters, but a church official described the move as a dangerous publicity stunt.

A spokesman for the Bishop of Ripon, the Right Rev David Young, said: "In general, the Church is concerned that any dabbling with the occult or psychic forces, however bogus, can be disturbing and dangerous. We warn strongly against irresponsible activity of this nature."

Mr Lewis, who was born in Brazil and lives in London, reads shells to "divine the unknown". He said his "come to me" spell using candlelight, mirrors, flowers and soft music will make users of the new fragrance more attractive, virile and better lovers.

He added: "This is not black magic. People criticise black magic, which is about negative prophecies of intent. I deal with positives."

A Lynx spokeswoman said that he was not being paid a great deal of money. "He felt that if he asked for a great deal of money, the spirits would be angry and look upon that as being exploitative."

Scientists figure out share madness

By NIGEL HAWKES
SCIENCE EDITOR

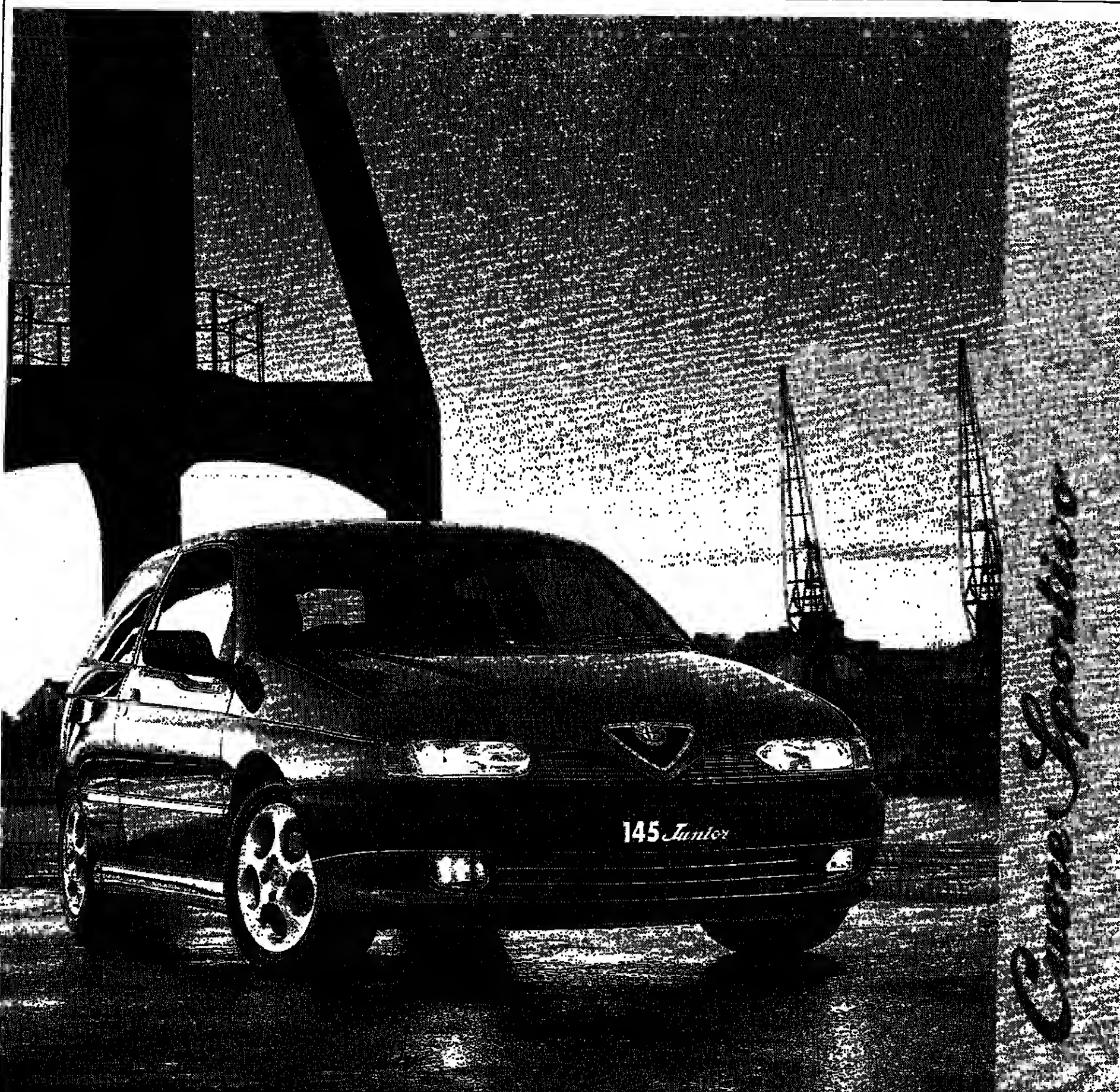
AS INVESTORS always suspected, the stock market is not the haven of rational analysis that fund managers like to claim. Its wild fluctuations are fuelled by traders who base their investment decisions not on companies' performance but on the behaviour of the market itself.

By looking for price trends and patterns, they help to create a herd instinct which increases the divergences of the market above and below the value it would have in a wholly rational environment.

Thomas Lux, an economist from Bonn University, and Michele Marchesi, an electrical engineer from Cagliari University, applied the methods of statistical physics.

They find that the market's behaviour can be simulated by assuming there are two kinds of players: "fundamentalists", who analyse shares by the underlying performance of a company, and "noise traders", who follow trends.

The two men created a mathematical model in which noise traders can swing between optimism and pessimism. They report in *Nature* that the model predicts a share price which in the long term is close to the value that fundamentalists would settle on. But the model can shift abruptly to turbulent behaviour with volatile prices.



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Bodice rippers make way for new romantics

A FORMER marriage guidance counsellor who was yesterday shortlisted for the Romantic Novelist of the Year award said that some of her clients' tales were too unbelievable even for her genre.

"Fact is more bizarre than fiction," said Helene Wiggin, who was nominated for *In the Heart of the Garden*, a story tracing the history of the millennium through an English country garden and the women who tend it. "There were many stories that you couldn't have put in a book."

Wiggin, who lives in a caravan with her husband and four children in the Yorkshire Dales, spent 12 years as a marriage counsellor. As real-life love is now less bound by convention than it was in the past, she believes that the romance genre is one that should continue to evolve. For her, such novels do not need to end at the altar but depend entirely on "the power of true relationships".

Ms Wiggin, who has also worked as a literary tutor, said that she had written poems and stories as a child but that an English degree at Leeds had stifled her creativity. Her inspiration returned only years after she graduated.

Other candidates for the

Those shortlisted
for the genre's
biggest honour
prefer love less
formulaic, writes
Dalya Alberge

award, which will be presented on April 21, include Jessica Stirling (Hugh C. Rae's *nom de plume*), and Zoe Fairbairns, for a book she published after eight years of writers' block.

Ms Fairbairns, who believes that her writer's block was brought on by the exhaustion of writing several books in the 1970s and 1980s, today works as a subtitler for television programmes for the deaf. She was picked for *Other Names*, a story set against the world of a "dangerously charming" insurance man who changes the lives of two women.

"I've never ended a book with wedding bells," she said, denying any suggestion that romance has its limits.

People might not think the insurance industry was a romantic subject, she said, "but

people in insurance have romances".

Hugh C. Rae, 63, took on a woman's name after switching from crime writing to romance. He has been shortlisted for *The Wind from the Hills*, an epic tale of love, greed and betrayal set on the remote Scottish isle of Mull. Yesterday he said that there was plenty of "sin and suffering" in his books.

The Romantic Novelists' Association says that between 8 and 10 per cent of adults buy at least one romance novel each year, making it the second most popular fiction genre after crime. Most romance readers are women.

The association's research found that "modern women demand modern novels and wedding bells are no longer a prerequisite for a good romantic read".

Angela Arney, chairman of the association, said: "We have come a long way from the point when all romantic fiction involved a swooning virgin and a tall, dark, handsome stranger. Our shortlist this year captures the essence of love in all its contexts. The heroines range from a successful childless thirtysomething to a betrayed widow."

The other writers shortlisted



Hugh C. Rae, Zoe Fairbairns, Elayn Duffy, Maeve Haran (seated), Victoria Clayton (standing), Clare Chambers, Catherine Jones and Helene Wiggin have been shortlisted for the Romantic Novelist of the Year award

WORDS FROM THE HEART

HELENE WIGGIN is in her 50s, married with four children. Graduated from Leeds University to become a teacher. Worked as a literary tutor, novelist, critic, publisher and health worker.

In the Heart of the Garden
"Something in the night air drew him through the yew arch up the steps to the hidden house, some wayward spirit urging him onwards to the very place where his heart had been stirred. White flower heads waved like ghosts."

CATHERINE JONES is 43, was in the Army for eight years. Has written one previous novel and a non-fiction guide to being an army wife.

Sisters in Arms
"Predictably, Lizzie was horrified by such a suggestion. 'Edwina, how could you? He's a married man.'
"So? I really can't believe that you are so naive as to think that a wedding ring has ever stopped a man from having sex with someone other than his wife. Why don't you ask Simon? He's bound to know."

ZOE FAIRBAIRNS is 52, studied at the University of St Andrews in Scotland. Established a highly successful writing career in the 70s and 80s, then experienced writer's block until now.

Other Names
"He was in his mid-thirties. He wore striped pyjamas under a rather classy black quilted dressing gown, and he had fallen over his breakfast. In so doing, he had managed to pierce the foil top of the yogurt pot with his big toe."

VICTORIA CLAYTON is 52, read English at Cambridge. Her writing talent was revealed when she had two children's novels published when in her early twenties. Has written two novels.

Past Mischiefs
"I had been standing in the pigeon tower when Jack shot himself. It's the most perfect little octagonal building, two storeys high and fifteenth-century, like our house. I don't suppose I'd ever feel quite the same about it, now. It was a bright October day, with a strong suspicion of chill in the breeze and high, thin clouds."

JESSICA STIRLING is 63, was born in Glasgow, and now lives on the edge of the city. Has enjoyed a successful career as a writer. Jessica Stirling's real name is Hugh C. Rae, and she is married and has one daughter who lives in France.

The Wind from the Hills
"He rolled on to his elbow and looked down at her. He still wore his lined tweed waistcoat and flannel shirt, the collar jutting out behind his ear. His face was sleek with perspiration and he smelled, biddly thought, faintly fishy as if he had been too close to the Dalriad's kipper boxes."

MAEVE HARAN is 45, studied law at Oxford then worked as a journalist. Has three children, and has written five novels.

All That She Wants
"Kathryn Henrietta eventually found the perfect man for her kind of love. He was a bit of a dandy, a bit of a snob, a bit of a flirt, but on their first night together, Kathryn was lying flat on her back with their feet in the stirrups and their vaginas facing each other with a sense of mutual satisfaction that it might have been a good idea to think of other things."

ELAYN DUFFY is 32, has worked in the tourist industry as an advertising executive and as a market research consultant.

Proud Heart, Fair Lady
"Suddenly he dropped to one knee pressing her hand to his heart. 'I offer you this heart a little battered and unaccustomed to use, but for what it is worth, it will be true and will love you to the end of time and beyond.' Kathryn thought she should pinch herself in case she was dreaming, but she didn't, as this was a dream she wanted to continue for the rest of her life."

CLARE CHAMBERS is 32, read English at Oxford. Wrote one novel, then worked as an editor for a London publisher. She has three small children.

Learning to Swim
"Marcus Hainley, I had rehearsed this meeting a thousand times in my mind, but in spite of all this preparation failed to deliver any of the brilliant and devastating lines I'd practised over the years. Instead I said 'Hello Marcus', putting the faintest emphasis on his name and smothering his strangeness."

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Viagra takers find short cut to big savings

IMPOTENCE sufferers have found a way to save money on Viagra. Instead of buying pills with the lowest doses, they are buying the strongest and chopping them up.

The Government has asked GPs not to prescribe the impotence pill on the National Health Service but it is available on private prescription, allowing patients to buy it.

The tablets come in three strengths: 25mg, 50mg and 100mg. Most patients are given the 50mg tablets at first and the doctor then adjusts the dose depending on the effectiveness.

Viagra is normally prescribed in packs of four, regarded by GPs as an adequate month's supply. Stronger tablets cost more. With the chemist's mark-up, a patient will pay about £6.22 per 25mg pill, £7.26 per 50mg pill and £8.80 per 100mg. Big savings can be made by a patient who can obtain larger dose pills to cut up. A 100mg cut in two means a 50mg dose would cost £4.40 — a saving of £2.86. Cut into four for a patient needing only 25mg, the 100mg pill saves £4.02 per dose.

Doctors should only prescribe pills of the correct strength, but a survey by the GPs' newspaper *Doctor* has found that many GPs who run impotence clinics say they know that dozens of patients

Patients are buying top strength pills to split in two, reports Ian Murray

are managing to get hold of 100mg pills to dissect, even though they are warned not to. David Delvin, a Cambridge GP, said he had warned patients cutting 100mg pills into four. "They are not getting an exact dose, but it is the cheapest way of doing it."

A spokesman for Pfizer, the manufacturer, said that the tablets were tested for stability and this could not be guaranteed if the pill was broken up. It was also almost impossible to ensure a correct dose.

He said: "The trouble is the patient has to pay for a consultation, pay for a private prescription and pay an extra 50 per cent on the cost at the chemist. It makes it all very expensive and you can understand why people do it."

The spokesman added: "This practice is potentially dangerous and is the result of government attempts to restrict the use of a drug which is

cheaper and more effective than any of its rivals."

He said that some pharmacists might also reduce their mark-up on the stronger pills as a loss leader, hoping to sell tonics and other products to patients with impotence.

Doctors have been issuing private prescriptions for Viagra after government guidance last September not to issue it on the NHS. The British Medical Association has now advised members that they are legally able to prescribe the drug on the NHS despite the government guidance.

They will continue to be able to do so until March 4 when the Government completes a consultation process on new rules that would limit Viagra on the NHS to people with a number of specific conditions or those considered to be in "severe distress".



Helen Doman meeting the Prince and Simon Fielding yesterday

Prince shows faith in hands-on method of healing

By ALAN HAMILTON

THE Prince of Wales, an occasional martyr to the pain of old polo injuries, watched intently as Helen Doman, prostrate on a table, had her slim legs gently pulled, pushed, bent and turned.

"You can see," explained Simon Chesney, the osteopath manipulating the limb, "how the anterior-superior iliac spine is affected; the pelvis is twisting slightly to compensate for the leg." The Prince furrowed his brow. "Oh, I see," he said, plunging his hand into his hip pocket as though he had just felt a twinge of his own.

Mrs Doman, who is in her early forties, suffered a mild attack of polio at the age of three, and has regular osteopathy, without which she said she could never perform her aerobics. Thanks largely to the lobbying of the Prince, a convinced believer in alternative therapies, practitioners now have their own statutory General Osteopathic Council. Yesterday the Prince was opening its new headquarters in South London. By May next year, all practising osteopaths will have to be registered.

The Prince avoided disclosing whether he used osteopathy himself, although he admitted that some of his horses had received their ministra-

tions. He added: "As I have two rapidly growing offspring who are constantly injuring themselves at sport, I am glad there are osteopaths around to help them." He hoped that official recognition of osteopathy by the medical establishment would give encouragement to other alternative therapies that deserved equal status. "There are an awful lot of people out there who would be much better treated by a holistic approach to healthcare."

There are about 3,000 practising osteopaths in Britain. According to the council, they are most frequently consulted for lower back pain, one of the commonest ailments in a species not yet fully evolved to walking on its hind legs. Sports injuries, and whiplash neck injuries from road accidents, are also high on the osteopathic agenda.

Simon Fielding, chairman of the council, said that the Prince had played a key part in helping the profession to become the first of the complementary forms of medicine to be recognised by statutory self-regulation under a 1993 Act of Parliament. "He called all the right people together, from Parliament and orthodox medicine, to convince them that osteopathy was a profession in its own right."

Sterilisation can 'raise CJD risk'

By NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

THE way that surgeons sterilise their instruments in British hospitals may increase the risk of spreading new variant CJD, scientists have found.

The discovery will increase pressure on surgeons to use disposable, instruments, for many operations, despite the extra cost.

The brain protein believed to be responsible for nvCJD is extremely hard to destroy. Conventional sterilisation involves heating instruments to 134-138°C, quite hot enough to destroy normal pathogens.

The prion protein not only survives these temperatures but, in some cases, becomes more stable, according to experiments done by David Taylor of the Institute for Animal Health in Edinburgh.

He heated tissue samples for nine, 18 and 30 minutes, to

temperatures of 134°C and 138°C. He found that while the sample treated at 134°C did not remain infectious, the one treated at the higher temperature did.

Dr Taylor told *New Scientist* that he believes the higher temperature may "fix" the protein in the abnormal shape which is the hallmark of the disease.

It is known that surgical instruments can pass on CJD. In the 1970s doctors reported that instruments used to study epileptic patients had transmitted the classical version.

Concern has increased since it was shown that the infectious agent is present in the tonsils and other tissues before symptoms of the disease appear. This means that many routine operations could run the risk of transmission.

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Bar could pay taxpayer's bill for new QCs

By FRANCES GIBB, LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

BARRISTERS who are promoted to Queen's Counsel are earning an average of nearly £250,000 a year by the time they are appointed.

The selection process can cost the taxpayer £80,000 a year, but costs the successful applicants just £150. However, a question tabled in the Commons by an MP who used to be a solicitor has brought a reply that the system may be changed.

The figures for what barristers earn before being made QCs were released to Andrew Dismore, Labour MP for Hendon. They are bound to fuel the case for the QC selection system to be funded by barristers.

At present the lengthy annual selection procedure known as the silk round occupies several months of civil servants' time and is borne by the taxpayer. But earlier this week the Lord Chancellor indicated that he and his Minister of State, Geoff Hoon, wanted to look at recovering the cost of the system from successful applicants. Lord Irvine of Lairg said: "There is an analogy in the way that the civil courts recover their costs through fees charged."

About 10 per cent of the 8,000 barristers in private practice have taken silk. On average barristers apply 2½ times each but some have ap-

plied as many as 25 times. Unsuccessful applicants were earning far less on average than successful ones, with average gross earnings of £165,000, confirming the belief at the Bar that earnings are a factor in the chances of success.

Mr Dismore, who used to brief barristers, said that the whole system needed to be made much more transparent so that people knew why they were turned down.

There also needed to be a system of checks on the competence of QCs. "The Bar says this is a kind of kitemark but there is no way of knowing whether a QC is still up to the mark, no means of appraisal or even an L-plate system. Once appointed, they can go on until they are 90."

More than 100 MPs have signed a motion tabled by Mr Dismore seeking a review of the silk system as part of the present reform of the legal profession.

A spokesman for the Bar said that barristers would be perfectly happy with paying for the Queen's Counsel selection system. "We have suggested this to officials ourselves, some time ago," he added.



IN THE TA YOU NEED TO BE READY AT

IN THE TA YOU NEED TO BE READY AT ANY MOMENT

TA offers recruits a double life

A recruiting poster similar to a hologram is being launched today as part of a £3 million campaign to try to entice young people into the Territorial Army (Michael Evans writes). People passing the 8ft poster will see the figure change from a building-site worker (top) to a soldier on peace-keeping operations. The posters, by Saatchi & Saatchi, employ a system called len-

ticular photography in which one image is superimposed on the other. It is thought to be the first time the system has been used on this scale. The TA needs 10,000 recruits each year despite the 25 per cent cut in the force announced last year. MoD sources said the poster aimed to show that TA personnel could find themselves on duties around the world.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Court fight on chemist shop prices

A battle to end price maintenance on over-the-counter branded medicines has been launched in the High Court.

The Office of Fair Trading began a preliminary hearing for the removal of resale price maintenance on common remedies such as painkillers, anti-septics, vitamins, and cough mixtures. The so-called "health tax" is said to cost consumers £300 million a year.

The action is opposed by independent pharmacies, which say that the move would kill off up to a quarter of the 12,000 chemist shops in the country. Branded medicines are the last class of products exempted under the 1964 Resale Prices Act, which outlawed price fixing.

Union law deal

Free legal services will be offered to the families of 1.3 million public sector workers who are members of Unison, Britain's biggest union. The deal with a personal injuries law firm is the first of its kind by a big trade union.

Yemen caution

British Airways has put off the start of flights to Yemen because of recent kidnappings. The airline stopped flights there in 1994 but hopes to resume them soon. About 85 foreigners have been abducted since early December.

Tracked down

Two thieves who raided a bicycle shop after a snowfall were arrested by police who followed tyre tracks to their home. Peter Darke, owner of the Sunderland shop, said: "I never thought I would be so glad to see a snow shower."

A less des res

An estate agent has begun an inquiry after a newspaper advert for a flat in Nailsea, Somerset, included the warning "drug dealers next door". Halifax Property Services said: "This is not a description we would let staff use."

Shark surprise

A 31cm shark weighing 37lb has been caught in a net off Blythton. The crew of the fishing boat, *Cockburn*, took half an hour to land the fish, which is rare in British waters. The carcass was sold to a French buyer at £3 a kilo.

Line is drawn

A web site for the Welsh assembly launched by Ron Davies, former Welsh Secretary, has been closed after it was bombarded with scurrilous comments. An information-only National Assembly Campaign Website has replaced it.

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Transvestite was 'forced to quit jail'

By A CORRESPONDENT

A PRISON OFFICER who disclosed in a newspaper article that he was a transvestite was forced to resign because his employers were embarrassed, an employment tribunal has ruled yesterday.

Anthony Jensen-Read is claiming constructive dismissal against the private security firm Premier Prison Services. Mr Jensen-Read, 51, who has been married twice and is a part-time drag performer, told the tribunal in Birmingham: "I was part of a set-up."

The tribunal was told that two women officers had brought sexual harassment claims against Mr Read, and that he had left a prisoner in an insecure van. One woman's complaint was dismissed, but Mr Read was given a written warning after he admitted putting his hands on the waist of the second woman.

Mr Jensen-Read's former supervisor, James Wilson, told

Jensen-Read: accused prison firm of a "set-up"

the tribunal: "He was one of the hardest working and most conscientious of custody officers employed. He was a willing worker who did many, many hours."

Mr Jensen-Read, from Wolverhampton, said that he was punished for incidents for which other officers would have escaped discipline. The hearing continues.

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Benefits crackdown on single mothers

By JILL SHERMAN AND ALEXANDRA FREAN

SINGLE mothers will have to attend jobcentre interviews shortly after their babies are born or risk losing benefit under proposals in the Welfare Reform Bill published yesterday.

Alistair Darling unveiled what he called "harsh but justifiable" plans to force claimants — for housing benefit, income support, council tax benefit, lone parent benefit and disability benefits — to attend interviews in an attempt to end the "something for nothing" culture.

"There is no unconditional right to benefit," the Social Security Secretary said. "People

have a right to expect help to get into work, and security if they cannot. In turn they have a responsibility to take up that help. If you don't turn up you don't get the benefit."

Although he pledged that no single parent or disabled person would be forced to take a job, he admitted that even single mothers of young babies would be required to turn up to discuss job opportunities.

They would then be expected to return for successive interviews at regular intervals if they decided not to take up a job. These interviews would continue at "significant milestones", when for example

their child went to primary school. They would be expected to take jobs once their children left school.

Under the Government's New Deal, only lone mothers with children of five and over have to go for job assessment. But under the Welfare Reform Bill the Government has decided to have no minimum age for a first interview.

Mr Darling denied that any mother would be expected to attend the day after a child was born, but said it was "reasonable" to show what was on offer.

The Bill proposes that all benefit claimants must attend interviews within three days of making their first claim. The interview would discuss entitlement, reasons for not working and help in getting a job.

All claimants of working age, apart from lone parents and disabled people, would then be required to take a job within a defined length of time or lose unemployment benefit. The remainder — lone parents and disabled — would be expected to return for repeat interviews.

Labour left-wingers warned the Prime Minister against harassing single parents and disabled people. Lynne Jones, Labour MP for Birmingham Selly Oak, who led last year's Commons revolt over lone parent benefit, said that the new scheme would only be acceptable if it helped people become

more independent. "People fear this kind of harassment will be oppressive, particularly to those with mental ill-health or going through a relationship breakdown," she told Radio 4.

Frank Field, who lost his job as Welfare Reform Minister last summer, said that compulsory interviews could simply be a way of "roughing up" claimants unless the scheme was adequately resourced.

The Bill also details:
□ The introduction of stakeholder pension schemes for middle-to-high earners and a second state pension for low earners to supplement the basic state retirement pension.
□ The extension of widow's benefit to men. This includes a lump sum of £2,000 and a weekly payment of £85 to those with dependent children.

□ Divorce reforms to enable women to claim a fair share of their husband's pension.
□ Reform of benefit for the long-term sick, children and young people.

The Disability Benefits Consortium, which represents 500 organisations, said that the Bill, which will save £750 million, would deny benefits to thousands of people who become disabled in the future.

James Strachan, chief executive of the Royal National Institute for the Deaf, said the government had failed to tackle the real problem facing disabled people.

Labour has adopted *All Together Now* by Liverpool group, The Farm, above, as its anthem to woo voters in Scotland

Labour going for song in Scotland

THE MUSICAL battle for the hearts and minds of Scottish voters will be played out between an English football chant and a patriotic pub song (Gillian Harris writes).

Two rousing melodies have been adopted by the Labour Party and the Scottish National Party as anthems for the Scottish elections. Labour hopes that its choice of *All Together Now* by the Liverpool group, The Farm, will convey a strong unionist message while the SNP is convinced that *Caledonia*, the folk song by Dougie MacLean, will capture the spirit of nationalism.

POLITICIANS' HIT PARADE

■ Harold Wilson: *Hello Dolly*, which he adapted to "Hello Harold! It's so good to see you back where you belong!"
■ Ronald Reagan: *Don't Leave This One Behind*, appropriated from *White Springs*.
■ George Bush: *Don't Worry, Be Happy*. Bobby McFerrin, the composer and anti-Republican, threatened to sue.
■ Margaret Thatcher: *It's Great to Be Great Again*, commissioned from Andrew Lloyd Webber.
■ Bill Clinton: *Don't Stop Thinking About Tomorrow*, used with approval of Fleetwood Mac.

Both feature a memorable chorus and catchy tune. In a bid to encapsulate pro-union policies, Labour has altered the ten-year-old lyrics of the anthem from "All together now in

no man's land" to "All together now in this land". The chant will be used during party election broadcasts and at rallies featuring parliamentary candidates. The former top ten hit,

which is based on Johan Pachelbel's 17th-century Canon and Gigue, has previously been heard on the terraces at Everton and during the 1992 election campaign when Neil Kinnock led Labour to one of its most humiliating defeats.

It was originally written about an incident on Christmas Day in 1914 when British and German troops declared an unofficial ceasefire and left their trenches to exchange gifts, sing carols and play football. Party managers have opted to re-record the song using Glaswegian musicians to give the song a more Scottish feel.

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Crisis, what crisis? MPs ignore economic woes

Britain is on the brink of a recession, but you would hardly think so from listening to politicians. On the day when the Bank of England's Quarterly Inflation Report suggested that growth in the first half of this year was "expected to be close to zero", not a single MP raised the outlook for the economy at Prime Minister's Questions.

There was not a word from William Hague — although he attacked tax increases — or anyone else. Later, Francis Maude weighed in with a warning which blamed Labour's higher taxes, penalties for savers, a reckless spending spree and extra burdens on business. Mr Maude has a good point about how the burdens on business may hinder industry's long-term position but, in the short term, he is in danger of repeating the mistake of Gordon Brown when he was Shadow Chancellor of the Treasury.

While Mr Brown was prob-

Peter RIDDELL
ON POLITICS

ably slightly too optimistic over the economy and public spending plans last autumn, Mr Maude's fears then turn out to have been greatly exaggerated. The difference between the Treasury forecast in November of growth of 1.5 per cent this year and the Bank's latest projection of 0.5 to 1 per cent is not significant in itself, and is consistent with the Treasury's broad view. This does not of itself invalidate Mr Brown's public spending plans. Indeed, the increase in spending, and particularly public investment, planned from April, will offset the weakness of manufacturing and aid recovery.

The Bank's Quarterly Inflation Report, like most outside

forecasters, expects the current downturn to be followed by a pick-up in activity in the second half of this year.

The real issue is what happens in 2000 and 2001. Three months ago, the Treasury was forecasting growth of 2.25 and 2.75 per cent in the next two years respectively. That is the crucial period for public spending plans. If the recovery is slower than expected, there is a risk of public finances deteriorating. If it is faster, there is a risk of a "sharp deterioration" in the global economy since November. Apart from the financial turbulence in Brazil, Japan remains stuck in recession and growth prospects in euroland are continuing to weaken. If the long expansion in the USA ends, the global outlook could become much worse and this could set back British recovery hopes during the run-up to the next election.

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FROM MICHAEL BINYON IN REYKJAVIK

Tourism is a rapidly growing industry, and more money could be earned from foreigners coming to watch whales gambol at sea. Keiko's arrival from Oregon has sharpened the contradictions. Returning it to the sea will cost more than \$2.5 million (£1.52 million).



FROM CHARLES BREMNER
IN BRUSSELS

All EU states except Britain, Ireland and Luxembourg charge levies on blank tapes and discs to cover copyright fees. The law has yet to be considered by ministers, who must take account, but not necessarily adopt, the proposals.

FROM ALICE LAGNADO
IN MOSCOW

Moskovsky Komсомоlets said yesterday that neither

A shoddy runway is being blamed. "It's no secret that Vnukovo-2 has been asking for money for repairs for a long time. Now the President has been convinced," said *Kommersant Daily*.

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PEUGEOT

Aids trial ex-minister defies court

Adam Sage in Paris watches a defendant in aggressive, indignant form at the tainted blood hearing

THE gulf separating French citizens from the Parisian elite appeared wider than ever yesterday as former ministers began giving evidence in their trial for manslaughter in connection with France's contaminated blood scandal.

For almost an entire day in the witness box, Edmond Hervé, the former Health Minister, was clinical, aggressive and indignant.

He interrupted the presiding judge, slapped down the state prosecutor and repeatedly wagged an admonishing finger at the 70 people in the public gallery.

There was no hint of apology, no sign of modesty and no word for the 4,333 people who contracted Aids in the 1980s after receiving infected blood products.

Le Monde summed up the hearing as "surreal".

M Hervé, 56, is being tried along with the former Prime Minister, Laurent Fabius, 52, and another former Health Minister, Georgina Dufoix, 55, for their alleged failure to ensure the screening and treatment of blood donated by high-risk groups, including prisoners, in 1985.

For a French political class buffeted by corruption scandals but never before called to account in a court of law, yesterday's events were historic and, in M Hervé's eyes, clearly unacceptable.

M Hervé was Secretary of State for Health from 1983 to 1986, a controversial era in the history of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, which had just been discovered and remained uncharted ground for much of the world's medical profession.

"France acted very quickly" to stem the spread of the HIV virus through blood transfusions, he told the special court which is sitting for the first time, after being set up in 1993 to try ministers for alleged crimes committed while they were in office.

France was the third country in the world to introduce compulsory Aids blood tests



The three accused, former Prime Minister Laurent Fabius, right, Georgina Dufoix and Edmond Hervé in the courtroom in Paris yesterday

on August 1, 1985, aimed at avoiding the infection of haemophiliacs and hospital patients, he said.

The Socialist former minister did nothing to disguise his outrage at being asked to explain how the French authorities made the decisions which led to about 1,000 deaths from Aids.

"I was the conductor... not a mere laboratory chief," he told Roger Lucas, the state prosecutor, who repeatedly exclaimed "I'm astonished" when M Hervé admitted to not having been aware of reports by ministry and research officials over whether or not mandatory testing ought to be introduced.

Asked exactly how he delegated authority to his staff, M Hervé remained evasive. He said he "assumed responsibility for my aides", while admitting that discussion at the time on the new disease was "highly technical and I could only refer to advice from the experts".

"I was an active and serious actor in the Government," M Hervé said, swaying forward and stabbing his hands menacingly towards the 12 MPs and three magistrates who will decide whether to send him to prison for up to five years.

"I was at the ministry every week from Tuesday morning to Friday afternoon," he told the court. "It was very rare that I left my office before 11pm. That wasn't a problem because I have a flat on the seventh floor of the ministry."

Behind him, relatives of the seven victims whose complaints sparked the case looked on in silence. On Monday, they had spoken briefly of their loved ones and their anger, before the judge, Christian Le Guehrec, told them that they had no further contribution to make.

Yesterday, M Hervé spoke of "inter-ministerial agreements", "modalities", "methods" and "principles" in a largely uninterrupted, five-hour exposition designed to illustrate his competence.

Everything appeared to

have been done to make him feel at home. The special Court of Justice of the Republic is, for instance, sitting in a room at the luxurious International Conference Centre in Paris, decorated in the manner to which the ministers have become accustomed. There is

France's Aids drama. The same, however, could not be said of the presiding judge's attitude towards the defendants.

Judge Le Guehrec appeared embarrassed at poking his nose into a political world long used to doing what it likes when it likes, and he tried his

his powerful voice echoing off the white walls of the conference centre. "There was no misjudgment," he said. None of the 15 judges contradicted him.

Mr Hervé was later asked why the Government refused to authorise the distribution of an American-made Aids screening test early in 1985, instead giving its approval to a French test that was not ready until several months later.

His reply avoided the question but emphasised the "principles of equality and ethics in which I believe". This drew a strangled cry from the victims' relatives. For a brief moment the technical arguments stopped and the court turned towards the sufferers. But then Judge Le Guehrec spoke: "What I wanted to know..." he said. "Well, yes, just carry on."

'I was the conductor, not a mere laboratory chief. I was an actor'



Edmond Hervé - "there was no misjudgment"

Briton's 'insult' blamed for lost post

FROM CHARLES BREMNER IN BRUSSELS AND VERONIQUE PUJOL IN LUXEMBOURG

THE European Commission was justified in dismissing a British official for writing a book critical of monetary union because he had breached Civil Service rules by insulting policies he was employed to promote, the European Court of Justice heard yesterday.

In the Commission's first public defence of its sacking of Bernard Connolly, its lawyers dismissed his claim that he had been punished illegally merely for dissenting from the single currency project in his 1995 book: *The Rotten Heart of Europe: the Dirty War for Europe's Money*.

Mr Connolly, 49, is claiming damages against the Commission for libel and wrongful dismissal from his post as chief of the unit monitoring the exchange-rate mechanism. His book, he maintains, was a loyal attempt to sound the alarm on a project that he believed was harmful to the EU.

The Commission lawyers denounced Mr Connolly's book as a crude polemic that "insulted everything". Even its cover was an offence to the Commission and the EU, they said. This featured the landmark Brussels statue of a boy urinating, with the flow directed at a map of Europe. "This book is a pamphlet, not an economic analysis," said Julian Curral, counsel for the Commission.

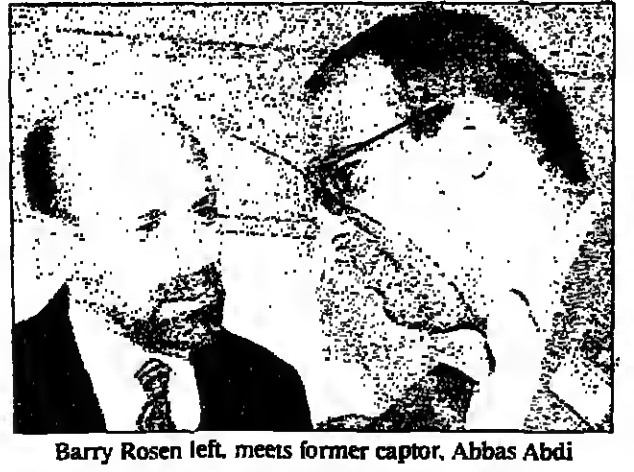
Mr Connolly had breached the "obligation of reserve" required of Commission staff and published a book on its policy without permission.

Mr Connolly's lawyers said that the Brussels executive had dismissed him purely because he was "guilty of the public expression of a policy disagreement with the Commission".

The Luxembourg judges are expected to reach a decision in the late spring.

Anabel Kaletsky, page 20

Reformed rebel turns tide in Iran



Barry Rosen left, meets former captor, Abbas Abdi

IT IS difficult to imagine Abbas Abdi, a balding, softly spoken father of five, as the firebrand young revolutionary he was two decades ago when he helped to plan the seizure of the American Embassy in Tehran. But it is not only his appearance that has changed with time.

As Iran marks the twentieth anniversary of its Islamic revolution, Mr Abdi, 42, is one of the former militant students involved in the embassy takeover

Twenty years on, revolution awaits reform, says Michael Theodoulou

over who are back in the limelight, this time as prominent supporters of the reformist Khatami.

Today, in a sign of the remarkable changes taking place in Iran, it is Mr Abdi and his friends who are the target of hardline fervour for backing improved relations

with the United States. He has been in the hardliners' sights since he dared last year to hold an ice-breaking meeting in Paris with Barry Rosen, one of the 52 former American diplomats taken hostage on November 4, 1979, and held for 444 days.

"The conservatives are still

very influential," Mr Abdi said. But he was confident Mr Khatami would eventually triumph in his fight against the old guard to liberalise society.

"Freedom was the main slogan of our revolution, but at that time, after 2,500 years of despotism, we had no culture of freedom," Mr Abdi said. "Maybe we needed 20 years to develop it, but it has come with Mr Khatami's election." More than half the population was born since the Shah's



Connolly claimed he was punished illegally

Leading article, Letters, page 21

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Triumph for a love forbidden by Hitler

THE triumph of lesbian love over Nazi barbarism is the theme of a new German film, telling the extraordinary true story of a forbidden relationship during the Third Reich, which opened the 49th Berlin Film Festival yesterday.

The film, *Aimée and Jaguar*, by Max Färberböck, an award-winning television director, has already received a welter of advance publicity and seems likely to follow Steven Spielberg's epic *Schindler's List* as a cinematic example of an individual German's struggle to defy the inhumanity of the Hitler era against all the odds.

The film sticks closely to the life story of Lilly Wust, now 85, who in 1942 was one of the

Tony Paterson in Berlin reports on the true romance behind a film billed as the successor to Schindler's List

millions of ordinary German housewives so captivated by Nazi ideals that she was awarded the Mother's Cross medal for bearing four Aryan sons and was reputedly not averse to making comments such as "the Jews are the cause of all our ills — I can smell them a mile off".

That was until Frau Wust, then aged 28, played in the film by the actress Juliane Köhler, bumped into the woman who was to change her life in a café next to Berlin's Zoo

station — opposite the venue at which yesterday's film festival ceremonies took place.

Frau Wust met and fell in love with one whom, in Nazi terms, would have amounted to her reviled opposite: a 20-year-old chain-smoking Jewish lesbian named Felice Schragenheim, a relative of Leon Feuchtwanger, a writer who was on the run from the Gestapo.

"No man had been capable of making me experience the emotional storm that I was

plunged into through this curious girl," Frau Wust recalls.

After discovering that her lover was Jewish, Frau Wust divorced her Nazi husband and underwent an ideological conversion that turned her into an ardent defender of persecuted Jews.

Adopting the nicknames Aimée and Jaguar, Lilly and Felice, who is played by the actress Maria Schrader, embarked on a tempestuous love affair that was brought to a tragic end 12 months later.

Following the German Army's defeat at Stalingrad in early 1943, the Nazis launched a campaign to render Berlin completely "Jew free". The remaining 7,000 Jews in the German capital were deported to

concentration camps. Felice Schragenheim was picked up by the Gestapo on August 21, only hours after the couple had returned from a swimming trip. One of the few remaining photographs of the pair shows them on that day, clad in wartime bathing garb on the banks of Berlin's River Havel.

In desperation, Frau Wust travelled to the Theresienstadt

concentration camp in what was then Czechoslovakia to beg for her lover's release. Her pleas went unheard and Felice was sent on to the death camp at Gross Rosen where she was murdered.

Responding to the praise that has already been heaped on the film, Herr Färberböck said yesterday that his work was important because it provided a view of the Nazi era that "differs completely from the standard clichés about the period".

Mrs Wust, who was honoured by Bonn in 1981, said yesterday that *Aimée and Jaguar* was an important film because it was a living tribute to her former lover, "this unique person Felice".



Lilly Wust, flanked by the actresses Maria Schrader, left, and Juliane Köhler at the Berlin Film Festival

Royals run from Olympic scandal

FROM GILES TREMLETT IN MADRID

EUROPE'S royal families have started to distance themselves from the International Olympic Committee (IOC). The crown princes of Spain and The Netherlands have turned their backs on the organisation, which is being swamped by bribery scandals.

Crown Prince Willem-Alexander of The Netherlands has suspended his membership of the committee and said he would withdraw if Juan Antonio Samaranch, the IOC's President, failed to clean up the organisation.

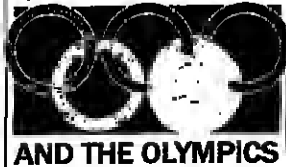
The Spanish Government has advised Crown Prince Felipe, 31, that now is not the time to take up an offer of IOC membership.

Prince Willem-Alexander is one of six European royals who are members of the 114-strong committee. The Princess Royal is the most prominent.

Prince Albert of Monaco and princesses from Belgium, Luxembourg and Liechtenstein are also members, as is Prince Faisal of Saudi Arabia.

None of the royal IOC members has been accused of taking bribes, but there are concerns about the wisdom of be-

CORRUPTION



longing to an organisation in which one in five members is accused of corrupt or unethical behaviour.

Wim Kok, the Dutch Prime Minister, said Prince Willem-Alexander would await a March meeting of the committee before deciding. "The special sitting of the IOC will



Willem-Alexander: said he may leave the IOC

have to clarify whether the organisation has the power to clean up its act, and is therefore crucial for the question of whether the Prince of Orange will be able to continue," Mr Kok said.

Abel Matutes, the Spanish Foreign Minister, admitted that the Government and Spanish Royal Family had been considering the possibility of Prince Felipe joining. But he said the Government had decided this was not the right time for the Prince, a former Olympic yachtsman, to join. "It is something to think about, but only in the long term," he said.

Spanish newspapers reported that Señor Samaranch, who is Spanish, had suggested that the Prince join the IOC when he visited José María Aznar, the Prime Minister, last month. "It could prove to be a poisoned gift," *El Mundo* commented.

An independent ethics panel set up by Salt Lake City, host to the 2002 Winter Games, has extended allegations of unethical behaviour to nine more IOC members. Twenty per cent of IOC members now stand accused of taking bribes from candidate cities. Fourteen members have resigned, been suspended or are under investigation by the IOC itself.



Xanana Gusmao as he leaves his Jakarta prison cell for house arrest yesterday

Timor rebel to join talks

FROM PATRICIA NUNAN IN JAKARTA

INDONESIA moved Xanana Gusmao, the East Timorese independence leader, from prison to house arrest yesterday so that he can play a key role in shaping the future of the disputed territory.

A few dozen supporters cheered as the 52-year-old rebel leader left Jakarta's Cipinang prison, where he was serving a 20-year term for

armed rebellion. Mr Gusmao was initially sentenced to death by a court in Dili, the East Timor capital, in 1992.

About 50 journalists in cars and on motorcycles gave chase as Mr Gusmao was driven to a house behind Jakarta's Salemba prison where the Indonesian Justice Minister, Muladi, welcomed him. He said: "Xanana is here to help solve the

problem of East Timor." Mr Gusmao said: "I feel I have been given a very heavy task and I have to do it... with talks with all sides I can create an East Timorese nation."

Speaking of his new accommodation, a four-bedroom house, Mr Gusmao said: "It's more convenient for meeting other leaders." His wife and son remain in Australia.

WORLD IN BRIEF

280 feared lost in Borneo sinking

Jakarta: At least 280 people are missing — many of them feared dead — after an Indonesian ship with more than 300 on board sank off Borneo, a port official reported. He added that a passing cargo ship had rescued 19 people over two days in bad weather after Saturday's accident, but the rest were still unaccounted for. It was hoped that some of those missing had made it to the shore, either by swimming or clinging to drums or planks. The *Harta Rimba* sank between Tambelan and Pengiki Islands, 124 miles northwest of Pontianak, apparently after pumps failed. Most of her passengers were workers for a logging company. (AFP)

Ethiopia expels envoy

Addis Ababa: Ethiopia ordered the Eritrean Ambassador to leave within 24 hours as intensive fighting along their joint border continued for a fifth day (Robin Lodge writes). Diplomats said that the expulsion closed one of the last channels for a negotiated settlement. Since the renewal of last year's hostilities, each country has accused the other of lying to convince the world that it is the victim of unprovoked aggression.

Anwar media blackout

Kuala Lumpur: The media were banned from reporting the trial of Anwar Ibrahim, the former Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister, for the second time in the three-month hearing (David Watts writes). Judge Augustine Paul declared that defence evidence on conversations between Mr Anwar and Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, the Prime Minister, was hearsay.

Record jail term ends

Rafah, Egypt: Mahmud Sawarka, 69, the longest-held Arab prisoner in Israeli jails, returned home to a hero's welcome after a 22-year detention in the Jewish state. Nicknamed the Mandela of Egypt, Mr Sawarka was arrested in 1977 and received a 45-year sentence for attacking Israeli soldiers in the Sinai, leaving one dead, when the peninsula was under Israeli occupation. (AFP)

PRODUCT RECALL

RECALL OF PRESCRIBED CALPOL PAEDIATRIC SUSPENSION

A product recall has been issued by Warner-Lambert Consumer Healthcare concerning the following two prescription medicines:

Calpol Paediatric Suspension and Calpol Paediatric Sugar Free Suspension

The recalled products are only available on a prescription from your doctor in individually dispensed and labelled bottles.

The paracetamol in the affected bottles has shown some signs of separation, which may have resulted in an increased paracetamol level in the surface layer.

If the product was shaken as directed prior to consumption, there should be no safety issue.

As a precautionary measure, if you have received a prescribed version of Calpol or another pink paracetamol suspension since the 1st of December 1998, DO NOT USE THIS PRODUCT. Please return the product to the pharmacist who dispensed it, as soon as possible.

If any of this product has been given to your child in the last 2-3 days or if you are in any way concerned, please speak to your doctor immediately.

This recall does not affect the following Calpol variants sold directly to the public by pharmacies i.e. sold without a prescription, in a purple carton:

Calpol Infant Suspension 70ml, 140ml and Sachets
Calpol Sugar Free Infant Suspension 140ml and Sachets
Calpol Six Plus and Calpol Six Plus Sugar Free Colour Free 100ml

Warner-Lambert is committed to providing safe and effective products to our patients. As part of that commitment, we are working with the Medicines Control Agency to ensure that this recall is accomplished as quickly as possible. We regret the necessity of this action and any inconvenience it may cause. We believe this action represents the appropriate precautionary measure. If you need further information, please call our Advisory Helpline: 0800 389 3897.

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Senate poised to end Clinton agony

By DAMIAN WHITWORTH
IN WASHINGTON

THE impeachment trial of President Clinton could end tonight as weary senators inch towards voting to acquit him of high crimes and misdemeanours.

The Senate was deliberating on the charges of perjury and obstruction of justice last night and Trent Lott, the Republican Majority Leader, hoped that he would be able to conclude the proceedings swiftly.

With the certainty that 67 of the 100 senators will not vote to convict Mr Clinton, only two questions remained: would the prosecuting Republican House of Representatives be humiliated by failing to get even a symbolic simple majority on the charges? And would any censure motion then be passed?

Some of the 55 Republicans in the Senate are unconvinced by the charge that Mr Clinton lied under oath about his affair with Monica Lewinsky. And even if he did, they are unsure if the action rises to the level of a high crime.

Democrats, keen to rebuke the President for his behaviour, saw the likelihood of a stiff censure motion dwindle because those Republicans who believe it is unconstitutional said that they would throw procedural hurdles in its path. If such a motion is not passed straight after the trial the momentum is likely to disappear during next week's Senate holiday.

More details began to emerge last night of an inquiry into Kenneth Starr's investigation.

Janet Reno, the Attorney General, is planning to study the way that the independent prosecutor asked to expand his Whitewater inquiry to include the Lewinsky affair.

There have been suggestions of improper contacts with Paula Jones's lawyers.

America's sex life goes west

Contrary to Hollywood myth, many in the US have difficulties in bed, writes Giles Whittell in Los Angeles

SO MUCH for the sexual revolution. Half a century after the ground-breaking *Kinsey Report* transformed American attitudes to sex, nearly half the country's women and almost a third of its men still experience regular sexual problems that amount to "a significant public health concern", according to a new study published yesterday.

An alarming 43 per cent of women feel pain, anxiety or a conspicuous lack of pleasure during sex, a team of academics reported in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. Their exhaustive survey shatters several myths — including that of the sexually repressed bluestocking — and suggests that the country's vast culture of sexual fantasy remains as remote as ever from reality.

Men seem to have more fun in bed, but not by much. Problems ranging from premature ejaculation to poor erections were reported by 31 per cent of them — a figure considered the tip of an iceberg whose true scale is reflected by the rush for anti-impotence drugs. The report "gives us a base for explaining why we had this enormous response to Viagra", its principal author, Dr Edward Laumann, said.

Dr Laumann launched the study, expecting overall dysfunction rates of about 20 per cent for men and women. "The rates are far higher than anyone had really expected," he said, adding that they should give hope for millions who thought they had been suffering alone.

Based on 90-minute interviews with 1,749 women and 1,410 men, the survey's most striking results concerned women aged 18 to 29, a group endearingly targeted by soft-focus Hollywood romances and increasingly sex-driven glossy magazines. About 26 per cent of them said they regularly failed to achieve orgasm, 27 per cent said sex brought no real pleasure, and 32 per cent said it did not interest them.

Sex for the group that provides most of the world's pin-ups is too often stressful, unfulfilling or plain boring, the researchers found. It is certainly a far cry from the moaning ecstasy delivered on cue in

When *Harry Met Sally* by Meg Ryan. Her famous restaurant scene opposite Billy Crystal offered an entire generation a sex soundtrack to aim for, while warning men that it was seldom real.

Crystal and his age-group have plenty of frustrations of their own. Men aged between 50 and 59 were three times as likely to report difficulty getting and maintaining erections than were men in their twenties, the report found, even though fewer than one in ten men said they derived no pleasure from sex.

The result is a scientifically proven mismatch between women in their twenties and men in their fifties — precisely the sort of coupling Hollywood so often offers. Warren Beatty and Halle Berry in *Bulworth* and Michael Douglas opposite Gwyneth Paltrow in *A Perfect Murder* are but two recent examples.

"These are the people who would be least likely to do well together," Debra Haffner, of the New York-based Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States, said yesterday. Such films, along with the saturation of sexual content in other media, give Americans "a pseudo-sense that we know a lot about sexuality", Ms Haffner said.

"In America everyone thinks everyone else is having better, hotter and more frequent sex than you are. And as long as you feel you're the only one, it's very hard to take the plunge and go to a library or doctor for more information. This report lets you know you are not alone."

Stress, overwork and money problems were linked consistently to unhappy sex lives, though the report emphasised



Meg Ryan and Billy Crystal in a scene from *When Harry Met Sally*. Their restaurant scene offered a generation a sex soundtrack to aim for

it was unclear which came first. However, two factors behind better sex did emerge.

Remarkably, unmarried women were 50 per cent more likely than married ones to report problems having orgasms, while men and women without high school diplomas reported higher levels of sexual dysfunction than those who completed school. Going

to college is even better for one's sex life, it appears. Men with degrees reported a far lower incidence of premature ejaculation than those without.

Women in their twenties who are miserable about sex have grounds for hope, according to the report. Unlike men, for whom middle age brings the spectre of impotence, women in their fifties reported less

pain and more pleasure during sex than those still experimenting with partners and intercourse in general. "For women, age is not the big deal everyone assumes it is," Dr Laumann said.

The report is certain to keep the country's cultural commentators busy for months, not least as a powerful argument for adult sex education.

"American sex education is aimed exclusively at teenagers and is best described as organ recitals and disaster prevention," Ms Haffner said.

"Kids are told about their rubes, and about the dangers of Aids and sexually transmitted diseases. But how to be in love, have an intimate relationship or simply have sex does not come up. Even if we did a better job for teenagers there is nothing out there for adults."



Halle Berry and Warren Beatty, who star in *Bulworth*

Children haunted by divorce

YOUNGSTERS whose parents are divorced are more likely to suffer mental health problems, such as self-harm or depression, an Israeli study has found, *Ross Dorn* writes.

Researchers at the psychiatric department of Hadassah University, Jerusalem,

found the chances of developing clinical depression as an adult are up to three or four times higher among those whose parents divorced before they reach the age of nine, than among those whose parents stay together. "The study of hundreds of mental health patients sug-

gested that there was a biological factor, perhaps a genetic disposition — possibly involving hormones — that could trigger depression in adulthood when an environmental factor such as permanent separation from a parent happens during childhood.

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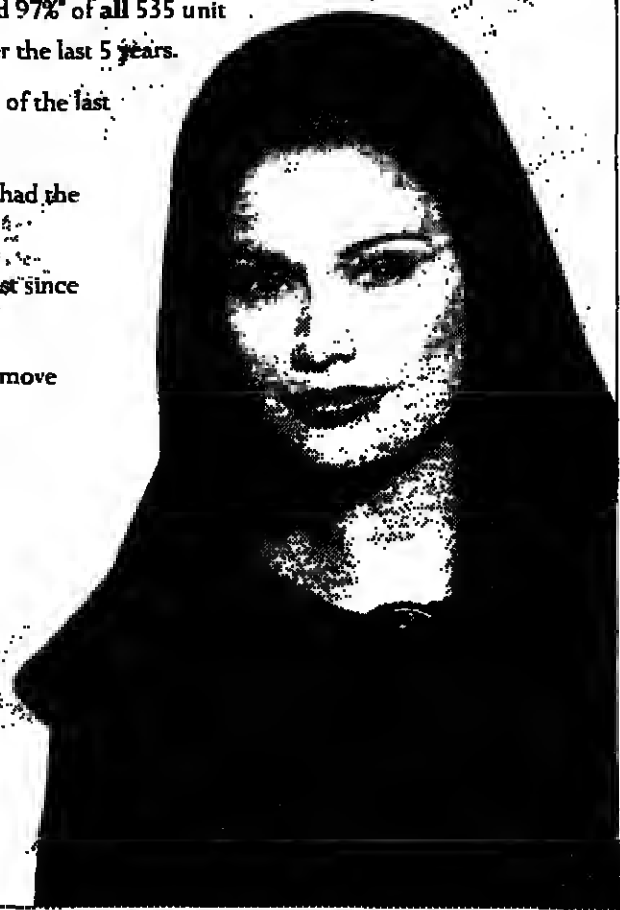
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Leaders on the diabetes battlefield



Dr Thomas Stuttaford reports on pancreatic transplants; the timing of King Hussein's death; St Valentine's obscure role as patron saint of epileptics; why the whole community should be vaccinated against meningitis; and the Bristol Cancer Help Centre

It is paradoxical that in many countries in Europe where it would be unwise to risk diluting whisky with the local water, the long-term survival rate after treatment for most, if not all, of the major cancers is better than in Britain. So used are we to reading statistics such as these, produced by the *European Journal of Cancer*, which show that our record only just beats Slovenia and Estonia and is worse than all other Western European countries, that we forget that we still lead the world in other branches of medicine.

Diabetes is the main cause of kidney failure and blindness in adults and a common cause of heart and arterial disease. It leads to more cases of amputation and impotence than any other condition.

In many patients diabetes is diagnosed early and is well controlled by medication. There is, however, a group of insulin-dependent diabetics whose disease defies the best-planned and most carefully executed management. The high levels of sugar in the blood, which are a feature of poorly controlled insulin-dependent diabetes, result in damage to the small blood vessels. It is these diseased blood vessels which produce the complications of a harmed retina and blindness, malfunctioning kidneys and renal failure, and the impairment of the nervous system which, together with arterial damage, causes impotence and bloodless feet.

As diabetes is the result of failure of the islets of Langerhans, which produce insulin in the pancreas, the obvious treatment would seem to be pancreatic transplants. These have been carried out in Minneapolis since 1965. Initially the outlook for the patients was not good, but some survived and one patient is still alive at least 25 years later.

As surgical techniques and knowledge about immuno-suppression to prevent the body rejecting the new pancreas improved, the results became better and better. Soon after the pioneer-

ing work in Minneapolis, about a dozen people underwent pancreatic transplantation in Britain but all died and, not unnaturally, the operation fell into disfavour.

However, work went on both in Minneapolis and elsewhere, and one young British surgeon, Mr Nadey Hakim, went to America for more than five years of training in transplant surgery at Minneapolis, Johns Hopkins, and at the Mayo Clinic. He learnt, among other transplant techniques, the difficult art of transplanting the pancreas.

Mr Hakim is now the surgical director of the transplant unit at St Mary's Hospital, London, where he started a British pancreatic transplant programme less than five years ago.

Results at St Mary's are now as good as those in Minneapolis and better than anywhere else in Europe. In 80 per cent of those operated on, the new pancreas survives and the patient's diabetes is perfectly controlled.

So rapid is the improvement that although patients come into the operating theatre with sky-high blood sugar levels, these are absolutely normal and steady before they leave the theatre — even before their abdomen has been closed.

Unfortunately, many poorly controlled diabetic patients have had their disease for so long that their kidneys have already suffered severely. This does not necessarily doom the transplant team, who can do a simultaneous pancreatic and kidney transplant — in fact, the operation is done so often that it is now familiarly known as an "SPK".

Likewise, if a patient receives only a pancreas, the operation is known as a "PTA" (pancreas transplant alone).

Another group of patients who have previously had a kidney transplant but with the root cause of their trouble — the unstable diabetes — uncured, have what is known as a "PAK" (pancreas after kidney) transplant.



It is thought that King Hussein became chilled by his wet drive through Amman, which decreased his resistance

How the rain caused a fatal chill

THE LATE King Hussein of Jordan's triumphant return to Amman, apparently in remission, brought relief to his many admirers outside, as well as within, his kingdom. No group was more surprised than the doctors when he had to make a rapid return to the Mayo Clinic.

It soon became clear that, however exuberant he had seemed in the drive through his rain-soaked capital, he was dying. As a last resort, another bone-marrow transplant from his sister was attempted but his body could cope no more and the graft was rejected. Although his sister was a suitable donor in terms of tissue-type cross-matching, she is middle-aged. Bone-marrow transplants work better from young donors. The questions the doctors asked was whether the King's health, although apparently relatively good, was already failing when he returned to Jordan or whether the trip was only to achieve political ends.

It was known that sooner or later the King would develop complications from his non-Hodgkin's lymphoma but death was not thought to be imminent. The explanation given is that it was the rain, and his soaking, which hastened his end. The suggestion is that he became chilled, which reduced his resistance — he was already on powerful immuno-suppressant drugs to protect an earlier bone-marrow transplant — and that an intercurrent organism lurking harmlessly in his body caused an overwhelming infection. In his weakened state, and with a high fever, the new transplant didn't help, and King Hussein lapsed into multi-systems failure.

Thunderbolts and flashes

birth rate, particularly — but not entirely — in unmarried women, rises in September, 40 weeks after the Christmas party season. The number of abortions, and those seeking HIV tests, is greatest in the first quarter. Condom sales also peak just before Christmas. On the Continent, where New Year's Eve is the height of the festive season, the birth rate peaks in October.

As well as looking after lovers, St Valentine is also the patron saint of those with epilepsy. He was no doubt on the alert when the Prince of Wales and Camilla Parker Bowles recently left the Ritz together. So unrelenting were the flashes from the photographers' cameras that television companies felt it unwise to broadcast pictures for fear of

inducing epileptic seizures. Professor Colin Binnie of the Institute of Epileptology at King's College London has studied the effect of intermittent flashing lights on the brain. In 1997, when the bad-dies were zapping the goodlies with their laser guns in the TV programme *Pocket Monsters*, the deep red of the flashes induced seizures in 700 people, mainly children, in Japan.

The colour of the flash is all-important as the brain recognises differences in colour through the cells, rods and cones at the back of the eye. Reds induce seizures 100 times more readily than white light, and few reds are deeper than that on the TV screen. The interval between flashes also matters: 15 frames per second is the most dangerous. Al-

though boys watch more TV and play more video games than girls, it is twice as easy to induce a fit in females. There are no racial differences, although sub-Saharan Africans appear less susceptible. What-



St Valentine has a dual role

ever the nationality, the risk is reduced by watching TV in a well-lit room, having a 100Hz set and avoiding programmes with lots of flashes. (If you must watch them, do so with one eye covered.)

In France, seizures have been induced by shafts of light from the red evening sun shining through trees along roads and striking a driver's face. Farther afield, they have been triggered by flashes of light through the pillars of the Sydney harbour bridge.

The 17th-century herbalist Nicholas Culpeper recommended lilacs for the "falling sickness", probably he didn't distinguish simple faints from seizures. Professor Binnie has modern treatment available but in order that his research may continue, the Halifax building society is selling lilacs of the valley in its branches this month in aid of the Institute of Epileptology.

Meningitis: vaccinate the community

PARENTS in Pontypidd, where there have been 11 cases of meningitis Group C in the area, seven from three schools, are bound to question whether the situation would have been different if preventive antibiotics and vaccination had been used earlier on a wider population. Others question whether the present protocol for treating meningitis is too rigid and limited and whether we make adequate use of the vaccine already available against meningitis Group C. In a slightly earlier age, we would not have considered that a vaccine, which offers protection for "only a few years" excluded its use. If the then Departments

of Health had adopted a similarly stringent line, many infectious diseases would have continued to run rampant. Boosters for one injection or another were part of life in the Forties and Fifties. Since meningitis Group C has a predilection for adolescents, it is hard to understand why, when there is an outbreak, the whole community isn't vaccinated.

A few years ago, when Uganda suffered an outbreak, the Dunes were universally acclaimed for their generosity and foresight in providing blanket immunisation. If progress into research for a longer-acting vaccine continues at the same pace, if vaccinated, today's adolescents would then be covered until it became available. There is an argument for vaccinating adolescents at school. Adolescent life is a risky time for meningitis as they live a close, huddler-mugger community life in the

classroom and as weekend clubbers. Ecstasy-taking isn't the only dangerous habit, kissing carries its own hazards. Meningitis C lives in the back of the throat and mouth and is spread through coughs, sneezes and kissing. It frequently oc-

cides with a flu outbreak, possibly because the resistance of the vulnerable is reduced, possibly because of the increase in coughing and sneezing. Teenagers would be well advised to enjoy party-free nights for a week or two.

Death of a cancer pioneer

THE Bristol Cancer Help Centre presents a facet of medicine that is acceptable to all but the most traditional doctors. It arguably more than any other centre, has established an understanding that complementary medicine — under which patients may receive the various therapies they offer with their doctor's blessing, given in the knowledge that chemotherapy will not be replaced by organically grown vegetables — is different from alternative medicine. Penny Brohn, who in 1980 founded the centre along with her husband David, Canon Christopher and Pat Pilkington, died last Wednesday. She had been suffering from

breast cancer since October 1979. Six years ago, after some intense campaigning on behalf of the clinic in the face of a statistically unjustified attack, the cancer recurred. Yet she had illustrated one of the tenets of the centre: that a big part of the battle against cancer is to establish a good lifestyle and an easy mind.

The centre teaches better than anywhere the value of holistic medicine, appreciation of the person as an individual and the merits of treating mind, body and spirit as an interdependent triad. The style of medicine bears some relation to that practised by my grandfather. A difference is that conventional medicine offers effective treatment for the body that can be complemented by proper nutrition, reappraisal of lifestyle and spiritual and emotional support. A new self-help pack, £25, or more information is available from the centre 0117-950 9500.

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THE SUNDAY TIMES IS THE SUNDAY PAPERS

Bring on the pomp and pageantry

The new parliament must open in style, says Magnus Linklater

No one watching the funeral of King Hussein of Jordan can have doubted the importance of ceremony. The dignified procession, the skirling pipes, the Last Post at the graveside, the presence of Prime Ministers and Presidents, all these sent out a signal of continuity and determination, not just to the Jordanian people, but to the outside world. It would be hard to overestimate the value of those few hours of public mourning — they were the King's last gift to his kingdom.

The ceremonial style of a nation says more about it than any number of political speeches. Strike the wrong note, and you are landed with an image that may be slipshod, pompous, overbearing, or all three. Nothing symbolised the Soviet Union more than those grim visages on the Kremlin wall, the strutting steps and the lumbering hardware. It can cloak tyranny in absurd pretension, as at the court of dictators such as Bokassa or Mobutu. It can be graceful, as at the Elysée Palace, or fusty, like the Vatican. Or it can, when everything slots into place, be just right, like the funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales. "How, but in custom and in ceremony/Are innocence and beauty born?" wrote W.B. Yeats.

Ceremony is one of the things the British are meant to be good at, and on July 1



Magnus Linklater

comes a great occasion which cries out for it. Only this time, instead of careful planning, signs are beginning to emerge that we may make a mess of it. The opening of the Scottish parliament in Edinburgh is a constitutional milestone. The ceremony mark it should be a gesture of confidence in the future, a recognition of the history and identity of a nation, and of partnership within the United Kingdom. It should arouse the enthusiasm and, if possible, the enjoyment of the people. But with just five months to go, there seems to be no clear idea of what should be done to convey these various messages.

The traditional elements in most great Scottish ceremonies — the Royal Company of Archers, the Lord Lyon King of Arms, the heralds, the Lord High Constable, the Church and the judiciary — have heard nothing of what, if anything, they are required to do. The Army, police and staff of the royal household, are awaiting firm instructions. The RAF, which was planning a flypast of Tornados, does not know whether they will be talking to the skies or not. Scottish Office ministers seem to be racked with indecision, with the "Roundheads" arguing for a plain and simple ceremony devoid of "frilliness", and the "Cavaliers" pointing out that this should be a day of colour and ritual.

The ministers' job is not made any easier by the remodeling of the Royal Family. The one certainty is that the Queen will open the new Parliament. But she is said to be anxious not to import too much pomp and circumstance. Since she will be required to travel from the Palace of Holyroodhouse up the Royal Mile to the

Assembly Hall, where the parliament will first sit, there are all the ingredients for a great day of pageant and history. But neither of these appeal greatly to the Blair administration. It prefers the Post-Modern, deconstructionist approach, in tune with Cool Britannia and the abolition of the hereditary peerage. The Prime Minister is said to believe that Scotland needs to shrug off some of its tartan-wrapped traditions, while Donald Dewar, the Secretary of State, worries about playing into the hands of the Nationalists, and is against heralds appearing "dressed like playing-cards".

This is all nonsensical. History and tradition, far from imprisoning a nation, provide the solid foundation on which it rests. The Lyon and his Court (an office equivalent to the Garter King of Arms) is the oldest institution in the country, quite possibly in all of Britain, tracing its origins back to the Middle Ages and the days when the old Parliament sat on the moot hill of Scone. The Scottish Honours — the crown, sceptre and royal sword — far from being the archaic trappings of an outdated monarchy, are proud symbols of power. Tradition dictates that they are either carried into the Parliament in front of the monarch by Scotland's premier peer, the Duke of Hamilton, or by the Lord High Constable, the Earl of Errol. The Royal Company of Archers dates from the 17th century and it has been the monarch's bodyguard since 1822. Far from deriding these traditions, we should celebrate them.

Pageantry and colour were always one of the more distinctive features of parliamentary processions in Scotland, as a deliberate contrast, according to historians, to "the secretive and informal practices at Westminster". A French observer at the opening of the new Parliament Hall in 1639 said he had never seen anything more magnificent in all of Europe.

Why should we be embarrassed by that today? On the contrary, we should embrace it. By all means include the modern elements that symbolise a forward-looking country. But do not banish the rituals that people will actually enjoy, and which tell the world about a nation which wears its past with pride. Let us have the trotting horses, the banners, and the skirling pipes. Let us have the Queen dressed in the magnificent green robes of the Order of the Thistle, rather than carrying a handbag — which caused such offence when it happened at the Scottish Coronation ceremony in 1953.

And one final thought: take the Stone of Destiny out of its ridiculous glass case in Edinburgh Castle and put it beneath the chair of the parliament's Speaker, or Presiding Officer, as he will be called. It is a symbol of power — and that, after all, is what this parliament is meant to wield.

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Alan Brooke
11 4 99



Let the whistle blow

Until Europe enjoys true democracy, the brave are right to speak out

In 1995, Bernard Connolly, a senior European civil servant, took a leave of absence from his job as head of the European Commission's monetary affairs department, to write a polemical book. The product of his working holiday, *The Rotten Heart of Europe*, still stands as the most intellectually persuasive, economically coherent and politically prescient account yet published of the development of European institutions in the 1990s.

The book argued that the single currency project would be used to generate an irresistible momentum for full-scale political union in Europe, dominated by an implicit power-sharing agreement between the German and French political elites. This was a political project which had to be pursued by stealth because neither the peoples nor the parliaments of major European nations had ever been willing to support it when it was presented openly as an explicit aim.

Mr Connolly was promptly sacked by the Commission. Yesterday he was finally given the chance to challenge his dismissal before the European Court in Luxembourg. Mr Connolly claims that everything he said and did was consistent with his contract of employment, since he revealed no confidential information connected with his duties and wrote the book entirely in his spare time. This case raises two broader issues, ranging well beyond Mr Connolly's contract, on which newspaper commentators — and indeed all European citizens — emphatically can and should have views.

The first is about the hidden agendas which always play some part in politics, but which seem to be much more dominant in the politics of the European Union than in the politics of any other democratic state or institution. The second issue seems more technical and bureaucratic, but is equally far-reaching in its implications for democracy in Europe. It can be summed up in a simple question. Whom is a civil servant supposed to serve?

The search for hidden agendas in Europe has never been difficult. Many European politicians have never felt much inclined to hide their desire to create a United States of Europe, especially when talking among themselves and outside an election period. Reading the speeches and position papers put out by successive German and French Governments and by community

institutions, it is clear that the single currency project is designed to constitute a big and irrevocable step towards the ultimate goal of political union in Europe. For Tony Blair to deny this, as he does when he states that membership of EMU is not primarily a constitutional issue, is to commit a political perjury far more serious than any of which President Clinton has been accused.

The steady accretion of power by European institutions has been guided by the "functionalist" theory of Jean Monnet, the founding father of the "modern Europe". This concept, lucidly described in Bernard Connolly's book, maintains that the unification of the previously hostile nations of Europe will never be achieved by the normal methods of political democracy; but political unification can be brought about almost imperceptibly by transferring more and more governmental functions from national to European administrations.

Monnet argued forcefully and precisely in the period of preparation for the 1956 treaties that these functional transfers of power, implying as they would the gradual unification of functional bureaucratic elites across Europe, would create an unstoppable momentum for full-scale political union, provided two main conditions were met. The transfers of power would have to start with relatively non-controversial economic functions, such as agriculture and steelmaking, so as to minimise concerns about the erosion of national sovereignty. And the functional transfers must be made irreversible, a condition guaranteed by the treaty doctrine of *acquis communautaire*, which asserts that all powers transferred to community institutions are permanently subject to European law and are therefore taken out of the ambit of national legislation.

This observation leads to the second, apparently technical, issue raised by the Connolly case — about the public responsibilities of European civil servants. This question is also at the heart of the second more publicised controversy over "whistle blowing" in Brussels, which almost led to the removal of two European Commissioners, Edith Cresson and Manuel Marín and the resignation of Jacques Santer, the EU President, last month. That case centred on the allegations of widespread corruption in the overseas aid department presented by Paul van Buitenen, an audit official who was promptly suspended for making his allegations public after he was discouraged from digging too deep. But the fundamental issue was the same:

Should they answer solely to their immediate superiors and commissioners or can they claim, as does Mr Connolly, a wider loyalty to the European public at large?

In normal constitutional democracies, even though whistle-blowing controversies still happen, such questions are relatively easy to answer. Different countries have different laws governing the rights of civil servants to speak out, but ultimately there is a legal line of accountability leading up to an elected official, whose constitutional status is clearly defined. In Britain, civil servants may be muzzled, but at least ministerial responsibility to the public is defined clearly, if rather erratically enforced.

In the new Europe, by contrast, power and responsibility seem largely to be divorced. Even when there is public accountability, this is not legally codified and arises more or less by chance. The European Central Bank, for example, claims to be the world's "most transparent central bank", because it issues a detailed press communiqué after each council meeting. But even if this comical claim were taken at face value, the bank's accountability is not enshrined in law — it is simply a policy the bank has chosen to adopt for its convenience and the time being.

The public responsibility of the Commission is equally undefined. Commissioners, who head the European bureaucracy and determine what people such as Mr Connolly and Mr van Buitenen are allowed to say in public, are very different from either ministers or senior civil servants in national governments. They are unelected, yet in contrast to the heads of Civil Service departments, they are not responsible to individual ministers and they cannot be dismissed. The lack of accountability, also known as the "democratic deficit", is hardly surprising in a European Union deliberately created by functionalist accretion in the absence of popular support.

Until Europe has a proper democratic constitution, it will be impossible to claim that the interests of voters are represented by commissioners, central bankers and other senior officials. In the absence of democracy, let us hope that some of their underlings continue to find the courage to speak up.

are you proud of your local library? Consistently write to me about the lack of choice in Swanley Library, run by Kent Council. Others write to me to complain about how long they had to wait in hospital. We don't have local institutions that accept real responsibility.

The author is MP for Sevenoaks.



Anatole Kaletsky

More recently, as European unification accelerated beyond bicycle pace with the single currency project, another homey metaphor was popularised by Helmut Kohl: that of European "construction". The purpose of EMU was to build a "common home" for the peoples of Europe. My counter-argument to this has always been that a common political house is unlikely to be very stable if the construction starts with a monetary roof and then moves downwards, with the democratic and constitutional foundations left until last.

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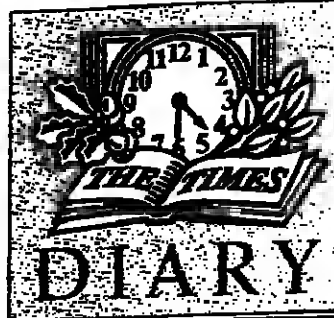
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Away match

KARMA and karma is calling Glenn Hoddle. The defrocked England manager is being wooed by India to lead it to the promised land — the World Cup. After fevered lobbying, Uma Bharti, the Indian Sports Minister, is considering approaching the turbulent coach.

In Delhi, bold spiritual claims are respected. The Rev Glenn's belief in reincarnation is considered highly compatible with the majority Hindu faith. This, rather than England's uneven performance in France '98, seems to have impressed sub-continental sports.

"India, where belief in karma and reincarnation originated, should offer Hoddle the job," runs a letter passing round the ministry. Bharti is interested privately, while expressing support for the incumbent, Syed Nayeemuddin, in time-honoured football fashion.

The Indian team has even been thrashed by Uzbekistan. As Michael Owen ponders how to spend £1.5 million a year in Liverpool, India's sliest ballsmiths take £40 a week — enough for a lot of karma.

● A NEW variation of leaves on the line by Railtrack: "discriminatory signalling". Not very PC.

Court drama

TONY BLAIR'S hidden brother has found notoriety — not as a £400,000-a-year commercial barrister nor as the PM's only sibling — but as a dead ringer for all-American action man, Gene Hackman.

But William Blair, QC, right, is not impressed with his new fame and prefers to keep his briefs private.

● A LOST manuscript of a feature-length film of the Magic Roundabout has been found in an attic by Phyllida Law, Emma Thompson's mum. Dougal and the Blue Cat by the late Eric Thompson features the usual suspects, such as Zebibee, in all its psychedelic glory, and the script is to be published.

Love's muse

HAS Tony Harrison, shortlisted to be Poet Laureate, outed his secret lover in a new verse? While denouncing the position of Laureate, Harrison writes in passing about how he needs his girlfriend: "It was in this Stratford bookshop that I heard/Ted died, and needed my lower, stuck on stage/as Queen Elizabeth in *Richard III*/To help me not to brood/I'm near Ted's age/While my lover had to do two *Richard II*s/I went to bed and read from front to back/all those four vols of Gray and found/these words: the saponaceous qualities of sack." Who is the mystery woman? The celebrated Stan Thomas is playing the part in *Richard III*. I trust the hint went down all right with Harrison's second wife, the soprano Teresa Stratas.



● HARRODS toilers are so honest. After a jewellery show, small going home presents were given to departing guests. Raine Countess Spencer, the director of Harrods International, declined. "I'd better not. I'm staff," she shrilled.

Jack snaps

JACK STRAW is growing precious. The Home Secretary was very cross when he spotted a researcher from Tory Central Office at the launch of the Asylum and Immigration Bill. Straw called Sir Norman Fowler to demand he remove his spawn. Fowler promptly paged the bemused girl to suggest she leave the gathering post haste. But as Labour used to creep into Tory briefings, and the girl signed in as a Tory, why did Jack get heavy?

JASPER GERARD

'We can't even stop paintball games being held in our local woods because of some directive from Whitehall'

Michael Fallon

Conservatism should be small-minded. There was always something desperate about John Major's search for the big idea, as if a great political philosophy could be revived by a simple schema or pithy slogan.

Forget the big idea. Let's have some medium-sized ideas that will fit local needs and awaken local loyalties. William Hague arrives in New York today. He will see what devolution to the lowest level has done to revitalise schools in deprived areas, and how local provision of welfare in Texas can trump anything the centralised state can offer.

True: Conservatism lies far beyond London SW1, out in our towns, villages and shires. To refresh itself the Tory party has to reconnect with the deeper instincts of a country that has never recognised the moral superiority of Whitehall.

Take education. We failed on grant-maintained schools because we didn't create enough of them. But we also failed because that which we let go in the funding of schools, we clawed back centrally on the curriculum. Why should pupils be denied five days' schooling a year because of the absurd "Baker" training days, which cost £140 million a year? Why not give headteachers the money and let them choose between books and training?

Half the flood of directives from the Education Department and let schools be different. Let them, for example, set their own hours. Why is every state school closed on Saturday morning? Wouldn't just one of our 24,000 schools choose longer hours if head teachers had the freedom to set their own pay? Instead David Blunkett sends them a 42-page document, prescribing four separate sets of technical standards.

Take policing. Why should the Home Secretary in London decide the length of a police baton in Liverpool? Why shouldn't forces fix local priorities and justify them? The excuse is Home Office regulations, but we should have more local discretion.

And benefits. Welfare has been overnationalised. Local hospitals or healthcare groups should be offered the disability budget for their area and left to assess and distribute the funds according to actual need, not to set formulae. Then they could keep the money they save. Until people get a feel for their local welfare budget, we'll never get real pressure for reform. If we could see what is being paid out, town by town, district by district, local people would complain about the waste and fraud and demand action.

Then there are the roads. Why should districts be hamstrung by Whitehall rules on speed limits? If my villages in Kent want to clamp down on speeding, let them. If the police will not take speeding seriously, let local councils hand out fines and keep the revenue. They could then spend the money on noise mitigation.

Take planning. Why shouldn't parishes decide on signs in their conservation areas? My own parish council in Isle Hill cannot even rule on an application to stage paintball games because of some statutory instrument handed down from Whitehall.

And when it comes to housing, neither party has a clue how to control benefit. The annual budget should be tendered out to the leading local housing associations, which could tailor the benefit to the local housing market.

Of course we Tories centralised too much. In many cases we had to because it was the only way to set national standards so that comparisons could be made. We were clearing up the shambles that we inherited from the last Labour Government. But the result was to further alienate local communities from their own institutions. Grant-maintained schools and NUTS trusts should have helped to refresh localism: instead they were seen as branch offices of Whitehall.

Are you proud of your local library? Consistently write to me about the lack of choice in Swanley Library, run by Kent Council. Others write to me to complain about how long they had to wait in hospital. We don't have local institutions that accept real responsibility.



ISLAM'S LUTHER

Khomeini's shadow still clouds the Muslim world

Twenty years ago an elderly, irascible Muslim cleric returned from 20 years exile and loosed a whirlwind in Iran. Ayatollah Khomeini's revolution overturned the Shah's regime and produced a realignment of political forces in the Middle East. But its ideological and spiritual influence spread far further. No corner of the Islamic world was unaffected by the radical return to theological fundamentalism as a reassertion of Islamic identity and ideals. Two decades later, it still reverberates with the aftershocks of a convulsion comparable to that initiated by Martin Luther.

The Khomeini revolution attracted a fanatical following because it reasserted the primacy of religion as a basis for all state activity at a time when Muslim countries were becoming increasingly secular. Ever since the early Muslim conquests, Islam has conceived of the *umma* as a single political and religious community. But after the early caliphs, the Islamic world lost that unity. Geographic, ethnic and dynastic differences produced splits, the most serious being the irrevocable schism between Sunni and Shia Muslims.

Iran, the centre of Shia Islam, has always been distinct from much of the Muslim world. Inevitably the search for unity and primacy has therefore had political as well as religious implications. The force of Khomeini's preaching was its uncompromising rejection of everything secular and everything emanating from the West. The message, as simple as it was uncompromising, appealed to the downtrodden, to whom westernisation had brought neither prosperity nor democratic liberties. It spoke to millions who felt a burning injustice that an ill-understood and thus alien Western culture dictated the political and material conditions of their lives. The message carried far beyond the boundaries of Iran: to Muslims everywhere who dreamt of a return to the golden age when the Islamic world was the centre of

learning and power. It contrasted the corruption and excesses of modern rulers with the simple pious lifestyle of the early Muslims, and called for an uprising.

The message alarmed secular rulers across the Muslim world. Some tightened their political grip with a crackdown on "fundamentalist" radicals. Some tried to outdo Khomeini in displays of outward piety. Some quietly modified their laws in deference to religious sensibilities, paying lip service to *sharia*; others made it the law of the land. None could ignore the appeal of conservative religious fundamentalism. More thoughtful rulers, among them the late King Hussein, responded by setting up new, modern Islamic seminaries in which science and technology went hand-in-hand with Koranic studies.

The political threat has now been somewhat neutralised. The terror, totalitarianism, war and clerical corruption that engulfed Iran discredited theocratic tyranny; and resurgent Iranian nationalism united many Arab leaders in self-defence against militant Shia Islam. Medieval theocracy has not proved a workable model of government in the late 20th century, and in Iran itself, popular reaction against it has set in.

But the Khomeini virus still has life in it. Secularism is on the retreat in much of the Islamic world, with stricter observance of Muslim dress, moral codes and ceremonies. Muslim intellectuals who have sought to reconcile Islam with modernity have encountered greater intolerance. Some Muslims, especially in the West, have seen the need to integrate with the pluralist, multi-faith societies in which they live. Others have veered towards extremism. Many devout Muslims understand that Islam is in need of theological innovation to free it of the obscurantism of religious conservatives. The Muslim world is still divided and unsure of its direction. Twenty years on, Khomeini's shadow inhibits a necessary debate.

GO NORTH, YOUNG MAN

Hague might learn more from Giuliani than Bush

After an impressive performance at Prime Minister's Question Time, William Hague promptly departed for North America. It is a measure of Mr Hague's current ill fortunes that he has chosen to visit the United States at the moment when the Senate trial of President Clinton is reaching its climax. The Conservative leader lacks luck as well as other political advantages.

He is right, however, to look for new political ideas where ever he might find them. In the course of this tour, he will hold talks with Governor George W. Bush of Texas and Mayor Rudolph Giuliani of New York City. It is the conversation in Austin, that may take place only minutes after Mr Clinton's final acquittal, to which the Tories have attached most attention. The meeting in Manhattan may actually be of rather more value.

Mr Bush is the outright favourite for the Republican nomination in 2000 and has a real chance of capturing the White House. Yet his success comes from a capacity for presentation rather than enormous originality in policy. This in turn reflects a state Constitution that makes the Governor of Texas one of the least powerful chief executives in the United States. Mr Bush's appeal rests on his ability to take his message to women, Hispanic and black voters often alienated by the Republican leadership in Congress. His substance may be distinctly orthodox by American standards. His inclusive style is very unusual.

Nor is the content of Mr Bush's famed "compassionate conservatism" really suitable for export. If the slogan sounds like his father's call for a "kinder, gentler, America", the detailed provision is not. Under the Governor, Texas incarcerates more criminals at a younger age — 14 — and executes

more murderers than any other state in the Union. It has slashed welfare provision to the minimum, legalised the carrying of concealed weapons and fostered a campaign to discourage sex before marriage. To the disappointment perhaps of some members of the Conservative Party, little of this material will make the final draft of Mr Hague's *Agenda for Britain* document.

The current Conservative crisis lies not primarily in presentation but policy. Their best policies have often been appropriated by New Labour: what is left is not especially attractive. If the Tories are seeking ideas on crime, education, transport or welfare then they would find Mayor Giuliani in New York, and a string of Republican Governors across the Midwest and Northeast of the United States, informative figures. These politicians have combined radical cuts in taxation and activist social policies with an emphasis on personal freedom that is not much heard in Texas. This concentration on bread-and-butter issues has reaped rewards at the polls.

There is an ongoing and intense debate in Conservative circles between those who believe it is essential that the party recaptures its advantage on economics and discovers how to extend market principles attractively into other spheres, and others who would instead place enhanced weight on broad themes and cultural values as represented by "the British way". In the American context, Mr Giuliani represents the first school of thought and Mr Bush the second. The Governor of Texas is, without doubt, far more likely to enter the Oval Office than the Mayor of New York. In the battle for Downing Street on these shores, however, it is Mr Giuliani who would prove the more formidable opponent for Tony Blair.

FAKING IT

Americans are not as hooked on sex as Kinsey suggested

Birds do it, bees do it, President Clinton cannot stop himself doing it; but, it seems, many Americans do not. While Capitol Hill is obsessed about what went on behind the Oval Office's door, the latest research from behind America's bedroom door reveals that surprisingly few regularly engage in sex. The survey, the biggest since the publication of Professor Alfred Kinsey's *Sexual Behaviour in the Human Male* in 1948, found that almost half of the country's women and nearly three out of ten men suffer from "sexual dysfunction". In the nation where free love began, many seem to share Evelyn Waugh's attitude towards sex: "For physical pleasure I'd sooner go to my dentist any day".

Kinsey ushered in the age of sexual liberation. While Senator McCarthy was whipping up an American hysteria about who might be lurking under the bed, Kinsey claimed he knew what was happening on it. The novelty and daring nature of his claims camouflaged the dodgy sampling on which his explosive research was based. The professor, a bisexual voyeur, relied heavily upon the experiences of a pederast and encouraged his wife to have extra-marital affairs in the pursuit of science. This did not prevent the public being captivated by the bewildering

array of suggestive graphs, tables and statistics.

Although his book may have aroused the hopes of millions of adults, Kinsey himself appears to have shared the problems that many Americans now experience. He did not consummate his marriage for several months and admitted that his basic motive was to prevent others suffering the frustration he endured during his strict Methodist upbringing. He once asked a female student to name the part of the body that can enlarge a thousand times. The embarrassed girl told Kinsey he had no right to ask her such a question. The professor rebuked her. "I was referring to the pupil of the eye, and you, young lady, are in for a terrible disappointment".

Millions of Americans are now sharing that let-down. They might turn on their televisions to watch *Sex and the City* or *Ally McBeal*, but when they get between the sheets, their reaction is to turn off the light. This could finally explain the reason for Bill Clinton's extraordinary popularity. He is willing to take on what so many of his countrymen would rather sit out. Hollywood might nominate *Shakespeare in Love* for 13 Oscars but the sons and daughters of Uncle Sam, it appears, think sex is *Much Ado About Nothing*.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Blair's Third Way compared with the Third Reich

From Mr Victor L. Harman

Sir, Max Beloff's parallels between Hitler and Mr Blair ("Third Way, or Reich?", February 9) cause extreme offence, and leave his credibility as a political commentator severely questioned. Moreover, for him to exclude the political violence and racism of Nazism, "which one must", is to analyse the means without reference to the ends, and stretches a hypothesis too far.

Should one be able to shrug off the absurdity of the proposition, one might well come to the conclusion that a man who took a once proud and powerful country, brought to its knees by a foolish war, back to prosperity, power and self-belief, was deserving of some place in history as a magnificent politician and statesman. To observe that such a man achieved this transformation of his country by perfectly legitimate and constitutional means is only to heap further praise on his abilities. Likewise Mr Blair.

The charges of gullibility fired at those who choose to work with Mr Blair would be better directed at an electorate who have taken a fair portion of the last 50 years to realise that they are citizens of a country with a flawed, outdated and elitist system of government. Putting aside, as one apparently must, ends limited to little more than the continuance of the status quo, successive elected governments have been distinguished only by a common dereliction of duty to reform the constitution, the only means by which fundamental improvements can legitimately take place.

Yours faithfully,
VICTOR L. HARMAN,
3 Pheasant, Prestbury,
Macclesfield, Cheshire SK10 4BA.
February 9.

From Mr Robin Mills

Sir, Max Beloff's astute comparison of Third Way Britain to Nazi Germany can be expanded.

If you were not "politically correct" in Germany you lost your job, or worse. In Britain, Mr Hiddle lost his job not for alleged bad management but for saying something in which, rightly or wrongly, he believed.

In Nazi Germany, local party officials enforced the party line and positively encouraged informers. In Britain today there are planning "enforcement officers" in almost every district council and verbal complaints, rather than first being validated by parish councillors in a democratic way, are considered in secret.

Policy on Sierra Leone

From the Foreign Secretary

Sir, Simon Jenkins's assertion today, "Fire, film — and forget", that diplomats "lie abroad for their country" was offensive and his description of British policy on Sierra Leone was deeply ill-informed.

Far from leaving town, as he puts it, Britain has remained committed to the maintenance of President Kabbah's democratic government in the face of a persistent and brutal rebellion. We are providing practical support on intelligence and other matters to the West African force that is supporting President Kabbah. Twice this year already, we have committed extra funds.

Mr Jenkins asks what on earth we are doing meddling in Sierra Leone and bizarrely accuses the British Government of imperialism in its stance against, for instance, President Milosevic.

What we are doing in Sierra Leone is making every effort to support those who are trying to prevent innocent civilians being murdered and mutilated by armed gangs.

What we are doing in Kosovo is trying to help the parties to a protracted conflict find a peaceful solution that prevents further ethnic massacres. This does not meet any definition of imperialism that I would recognise.

To ignore what is happening in places like Sierra Leone and Kosovo would not meet any definition of a responsible foreign policy for a civilised nation that I would subscribe to.

Yours faithfully,
ROBIN COOK,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office,
Whitehall, SW1A 2AH.
February 10.

Sticky elixir

From Mr James Leigh

Sir, I had assumed from the pharmacological babble of friends and pill-bottles that licetidin was a compound akin to nectar and ambrosia permitting new-age mortals to live as gods. I now discover from Word-Watching (February 3) that it is

A sticky orange substance... originally derived from egg yolk... now taken from a variety of living tissue... a mixture of glyco-phospho-lipids and various fatty acids... used in the food, pharmaceutical, petroleum and paint industries.

Thank heavens for that.

Yours faithfully,
JAMES LEIGH,
Ulwards Lodge, Thornton Watlass,
Ripon, North Yorkshire HG4 4AS.
wexyork@compuserve.com
February 3.

Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be faxed to 0171-782 5046.
e-mail to: letters@the-times.co.uk

The Nazi State intruded into every aspect of corporate and private life including what happened on private land. For example, it banned fox hunting.

All should heed Max Beloff's chilling analysis.

Yours faithfully,
ROBIN MILLS,
Barrington Grove,
Burford, Oxfordshire OX18 4TE.
February 9.

From Mr Richard Wood

Sir, The frustration felt by right-wing commentators with the continuing popularity and ascendancy of the Labour Government has produced a number of increasingly hysterical, un-savoury and personal attacks on Mr Blair. However, today's offensive article by Max Beloff, claiming to find parallels between Mr Blair and Hitler, plumbed new depths of malice and absurdity.

By comparison, Michael Gove's likening in the adjacent article of President Clinton (another figure whose enduring popularity enrages the Right) to Barabbas seemed positively benign.

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD WOOD,
1 Hele Mill, Helebridge,
Nr Bude, Cornwall EX23 0JA.
February 9.

From Robbi Albert H. Friedlander

Sir, The dangerous use of analogy in history is clearly illustrated by Professor Beloff's "Hitler-Blair" view from the groves of academe. Others will dissect it properly. I can only cite my experience as a child in Nazi Germany, my work in the US and my past 35 years in Great Britain. The poison of Berlin and the freedom of London I experienced emanated from differing political systems.

Beloff's "if one excludes the political violence and racism of Nazism, which one must" is a fundamental mistake: Hitler's later political actions were built upon the innate evil of his own character, which was part of his politics, and no analogy can be found here.

The misuse of power can be applied to many political systems, but Donald Dewar is no "Gaulleler-in-waiting", as Beloff suggests, nor has Blair appointed to the House of Lords the likes of Lord Riefenstahl or Albert Speer. Dredging these names out of the debris of past history and applying

Judges threatened in Zimbabwe

From Mr J. B. Reavill

Sir, Three Supreme Court judges in Zimbabwe have been invited by Mr Mugabe to resign because they have pointed out that the Armed Forces are not empowered to arrest civilians and that torture is intolerable (reports, February 8 and 9; leading article, February 9).

This is not the first time that an attempt has been made by the authorities in Zimbabwe to intimidate judges, but the one thing that Zimbabwe has always been able to be proud of — up to now — is an independent judiciary (letter, February 4).

One of the judges who have protested at the persecution of journalists for reporting news which is unwelcome to Mr Mugabe is N. J. ("Nick") McNally. He was a member of the team appearing in 1965 on behalf of two people who had been detained under emergency regulations because

of their support of African nationalist politics. The government of the day was far from happy about being challenged in the courts but it was willing to submit its actions for judgment. While he was still practising at the Bar he was a consistent supporter of centrist politics opposed to Ian Smith and the Rhodesian Front party in power.

The statements that have been made by the Zimbabwe Government in recent days seem to be saying that any acts, however unconstitutional, are justified if they are perpetrated to preserve law and order. Let us hope that the people who are now saying this do not later on find the same weapon turned against them.

Yours faithfully,
J. B. REAVILL,
34 Byron Way,
Stamford, Lincolnshire PE9 2GU.
February 9.

From Mr Robert Shaw

Sir, With his proposed scything reform of the House of Lords, Tony Blair, in one swift stroke of the pen, will surely dispatch far more hereditary peers than did the guillotine during the French Revolution. It would thus be more appropriate for him to wear a cockade in his "liberty bonnet" than to sport a moustache.

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL WEIGALL,
33 Westbourne Gardens, W2 5NR.
February 9.

Yours faithfully,
ROBERT SHAW,
13 Bridge Road,
Twickenham TW1 1RE.
roshaw@globalnet.co.uk
February 9.

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Yours faithfully,
ROBERT SHAW,
13 Bridge Road,
Twickenham TW1 1RE.
roshaw@globalnet.co.uk
February 9.

OUP music and poetry

From Dr Margaret Bent

Sir, Henry Reece, chief executive of the Oxford University Press (letter, February 9), is surely forgetting musical composition when he writes: "We have never published any other kind of contemporary adult creative writing."

If "writing poetry is a valuable activity, but... not an academic one and not part of OUP's primary purpose," why was it OUP's academic music books division, and not the profitable music list, that was closed down last year, during the 75th anniversary celebrations of their joint foundation? The transfer to an already overburdened editor in New York makes inevitable an overall reduction in commissioning by what was once the leading publisher of academic music books in the UK.

Health spending

From Mrs F. C. Stacey

Sir, Ms Lorraine Leighton deliberately chose to gamble with her life by taking Ecstasy and receives £250,000 in compensation for inadequate treatment of the condition induced by her irresponsibility, not counting the cost to the NHS of her care (report, February 9).

The NHS denies women with ovarian cancer the best first-line treatment for their condition on grounds of cost (Body and Mind, same day).

Where's the justice?

Yours etc,
F. C. STACEY,
39 Manor Road, Farnley Tynes,
Huddersfield HD4 6UL.
February 9.

OUP music has been invoked as a commercial standard by which the much younger poetry list fails, but a longer view is needed: Vaughan Williams and William Walton were once far from profitable, and the department lost heavily for its first 20 years. Those dead composers now cross-subsidise contemporary music, which is even less profitable than poetry.

If the cutting of poetry is to be defended on grounds of consistency to academic commitment, Mr Reece should restore the academic music books division to Oxford, in partnership with the music department from which they were split in 1982, and to whose excellence, specialist experience and prosperity both contributed from 1923.

Yours sincerely,
MARGARET BENT,
All Souls College, Oxford OX1 4AL.
February 9.

Period residence

From Mr Guy de la Bédoyère

Sir, I was interested to learn that the Romans arrived in the Lincoln area in "about 42BC" (report, "Des res with a slice of history", February 5).

I had been labouring under the impression that the settlement was founded in the 70s AD by the governor, Petilius Cerealis, who installed the ill-fated legion IX Hispana there, nearly 30 years after the traditionally accepted invasion date.

Still, perhaps the news has yet to reach your reporter.

Yours faithfully,
GUY DE LA BEDOYERE,
20 Eltham Park Gardens,
Eltham, SE9 1AW.
February 5.

Bahai education blocked in Iran

From Professor Sir Richard Doll and others

Sir, The Bahai faith, which was founded 150 years ago in Iran, advocates non-violence and toleration of all other religious beliefs. With 300,000 adherents it remains the largest non-Muslim religious minority in Iran, despite persecution.

Following the 1979 Islamic revolution, Bahais were at first barred from all forms of education and any Bahai teachers were to be dismissed from their jobs. Although their access to school education was reinstated in the late 1980s, access to university education was not a Supreme Revolutionary Council decree of February 25, 1991, stated that:

The Government's dealings with the Bahais must be such that their progress is blocked... they must be expelled from universities, either in the admission process or during the course of their studies, once it becomes known that they are Bahais.

Hence, for the past decade the Iranian Bahai community has organised an open-university style "Bahai Institute of Higher Education". But, in October 1998, 36 members of its faculty were arrested (of whom four remain in prison). At the same time, 500 Bahai homes were raided and textbooks, computers and furniture were seized by the Government's intelligence agency. (When queried about the seizure of the personal household effects, the officers claimed they had been authorised by the Ministry of Information to take anything they wished.)

Iran is signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which condemns religious discrimination, and as the nation modernises it will have to find ways of accommodating not only the Christian but also the Bahai community. Freedom for religious belief is an essential component of academic freedom, and we call on Islamic scholars to help re-establish, in Iran and elsewhere, the tradition of tolerance that has characterised some of the greatest Muslim civilisations.

Yours etc,
RICHARD DOLL,
Department of Medicine,
University of Oxford,
RICHARD GOMBRICH,
Oriental Institute,
RICHARD PETO,
Department of Medical Statistics and Epidemiology,
RICHARD PRING,
Department of Educational Studies,
KEITH WARD,
Department of Theology,
c/o The Radcliffe Infirmary,
Oxford OX2 6HE.
February 8.

'Blue Peter' childhood

From Mrs Susanna Denniston

Sir, We are informed that Stuart Miles, the presenter of *Blue Peter*, is leaving the programme as it affords too "twee" and "comfort blanket" an approach to life (report, February 8, later editions).

Perhaps Mr Miles has grown up. For too many children, however, childhood is increasingly shon and "hard-hitting". Is it a bad thing that a programme aimed at children should not set out to "shock or offend"? That the programme makers at *Blue Peter* aim to inform and educate within the realm of childhood should be applauded. It is a rare thing as we force our children towards an ever younger understanding of an adult world.

Let us be brave. Let us err on the side of caution with our children.

Yours sincerely,
SUSANNA DENNISTON,
18 Hotham Road, Putney, SW15 1QB.
February 8.

Mummies and Daddies

From Mrs Tamsin Woolsey-Brown

Sir, A study by Care for Education tells us (report, February 4) that nursery school children are abandoning traditional games of "Mummies and Daddies" in favour of those featuring mothers only.

I am pleased to say that the children at my nursery school in Norwich delight in playing "Mummies and Daddies", even discussing at length whose turn it is to be Daddy or Mummy, and sometimes agreeing to having at least two of one or the other.

Yours faithfully,
TAMSIIN WOOLSEY-BROWN,
Sunningdale Nursery,
1 Broom Close,
Bracondale, Norwich NR1 2AX.
February 4.

Gathering steam

From Mr Steve Field

Sir, I recently noticed that a set of new signs on the boundaries of Gosport herald it as "The Millennium Town". I confess to being somewhat confused as to the precise meaning of this claim.

This feeling was compounded when I purchased a new kettle proudly proclaimed to be "The Millennium Kettle". Perhaps it is a reference to how long things take to come to the boil.

Yours etc,
S. FIELD,
12 Rectory Close, Stubbington,
Hampshire PO14 2NA.
February 10.

BRYAN MOSLEY

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NEWS

Economy heads to recession

■ Britain will move perilously close to recession over the next few months, the Bank of England admitted as it predicted that growth would be "close to zero" for the first half of this year. Even after that, it expects growth to reach only 0.5 to 1 per cent for 1999 as a whole. The predictions were coupled with a promise to go on cutting rates but Tories accused the Government of driving the economy to the brink of recession. Page 1

Briton saves avalanche victims

■ A British man risked his life to pull three people to safety from the debris of a chalet ripped from its foundations by the avalanche in the French Alps that claimed 10 lives. Mike Cooper, 48, who has worked as a trail guide in Chamonix for 12 years, used a sledgehammer to smash through eight inches of concrete and then squeezed through the hole. Pages 1, 5

Gibraltar crisis

Gibraltar was thrown back to the siege of Franco's days when Spain announced that it would ban all drivers with a Gibraltar licence and threatened to stop all flights to the Rock. Page 1

Viagra savings

Impotence sufferers are saving money on Viagra. Instead of buying pills with the lowest doses, they are buying the strongest and chopping them up. Page 9

Railway marking

Only one of Britain's 25 train companies qualified for top marks under a new grading system for the network. Page 2

Estate invitation

On Sunday, Lady Worcester seemed to issue an open invitation to every "gremlin, gypsy and New Age traveller" to set up camp on her father-in-law's Badminton estate. Page 3

Children's hearts

The hearts of more than 170 children who died after surgery at the Bristol Royal Infirmary were removed and kept for "educational purposes". Page 6

Pension victory

Two pensioners who accused the electricity industry of raiding their pension funds have won a legal battle. Page 7

Sex shocker

A former marriage guidance counsellor shortlisted for the Romantic Novelist of the Year award said that some of her clients' tales were too unbelievable even for her genre. Page 8

Killer may save a nation

■ The return of 'Willy' the killer whale to Iceland may save one of Europe's most prosperous nations from bankruptcy. For as Keiko is trained for release into the Arctic, Icelanders are constantly reminded that whales command fierce passions around the world. The huge tourist interest in Keiko's rehabilitation may just stave off resumption of whaling. Page 13



While most of Europe shivered in the snow yesterday strollers in Estoril, Portugal, enjoyed balmy temperatures of 57°F. Page 5

BUSINESS

Merger collapse

A planned £10.7 billion merger between National Power and United Utilities collapsed on Monday night, it emerged yesterday. Page 25

Mirror offer

Regional Independent Media are planning to make a formal offer for the Mirror Group later this month, at a price that is unlikely to be above 200p. Page 25

LucasVarity

Federal-Mogul withdrew its bid to acquire LucasVarity, the car components group, leaving the way clear for TRW to buy the company for £4 billion. Page 25

Markets

The FTSE 100 index fell 9.70 points to 5702. The pound fell 0.77 cents to \$1.6277 and 0.46 cents against the euro to 69.63p. The trade-weighted sterling index fell to 100.0 from 100.6. Page 28

SPORT

Cricket

England threw away a good chance of victory over Australia in the first match of the final series of the triangular one-day tournament. Page 48

Rugby union

Kevin Yates, the Bath player who was suspended for an ear-biting incident last year, has been reported for stamping on an opponent. Page 45

Golf

Nick Faldo must perform well in the Desert Classic in Dubai this weekend to have any chance of qualifying for the World Golf Championship later this year. Page 42

Sarah Potter

Karen Brady, the managing director of Birmingham City, has won her battle for acceptance in the male dominated world of football. Page 42

Cinema

Cinema 1

After 20 years of semi-obscure, the director Jack Hill is suddenly in demand after a public homage by Quentin Tarantino, a self-confessed disciple. Page 34

Cinema 2

Best of the week's new movies, from Roberto Benigni's controversial Oscar-nominated Holocaust comedy, *Life is Beautiful*, to the sex-obsessed *Your Friends & Neighbors*. Page 35

Storm troopers

At the West Yorkshire Playhouse Ian McKellen leads a strong cast as Prospero in Jude Kelly's lively new staging of *The Tempest*. Page 36

Panto to Parris

The tenor Kim Beasley describes how a series of lucky breaks took him from minor acting roles to operatic stardom with his *Parsifal* at ENO. Page 37

Dr Thomas

Dr Thomas

Stiffness: King Hussein's death: St Valentine and epileptics; why adolescents should be vaccinated against meningitis. Page 18

Life of Spice

Victoria Adams of the Spice Girls and David Beckham the footballer may be the most glamorous young couple in Britain but, they say, they'll just be an ordinary mum and dad. Page 19

Reviews

Erica Wagner discusses the versatility of Gore Vidal; David Bellamy searches for giant squid; Gerald Jacobs hails the heroes at the heart of the enemy; Roger Scruton looks at the links between music, cosmology and theology; Bel Mooney confronts the fairytale wolf in the darkness. Pages 38, 39

TOMORROW

IN THE TIMES

MEDIA

How does a new newspaper tackle a well-established rival in a crowded market? Page 2

EDUCATION

Long, lazy summer holidays will be only a memory if five-term campaigners succeed. Page 2

RADIO & TV

Preview

Lifting the ban on ivory: *Horizon* (BBC-2, 9.30pm) Review: Joe Joseph finds heartbreak hitting people like a truck. Pages 46, 47

PERSON

Islam's Luther

Twenty years ago an elderly, irascible Muslim cleric returned from 20 years exile and loosed a whirlwind in Iran. Ayatollah Khomeini's revolution produced a realignment of political forces. Page 21

Go north, young man

The content of George W. Bush's "compassionate conservatism" is not suitable for export. If the slogan sounds like his father's call for a "kinder, gentler, America", the detailed provision is not. Page 21

Faking it

Birds do it, bees do it, President Clinton cannot stop himself doing it; but, it seems, many Americans do not. The latest survey from behind America's bedroom door reveals that surprisingly few regularly engage in sex. Page 21

ANATOLE KALETSKY

Until Europe has a proper democratic constitution, it will be impossible to claim that the interests of voters are represented by commissioners, central bankers and other senior officials. Page 20

MAGNUS LINKLATER

Ceremony is one of the things the British are meant to be good at, and on July 1 comes a great occasion which cries out for it. Only this time, instead of careful planning, signs are beginning to emerge that we may make a mess. Page 20

MICHAEL FALLON

True Conservatism lies far beyond London SW1, out in our towns and shires. To refresh itself the Tory party has to reconnect with the deeper instincts of a country that has never recognised the moral superiority of Whitehall. Page 20

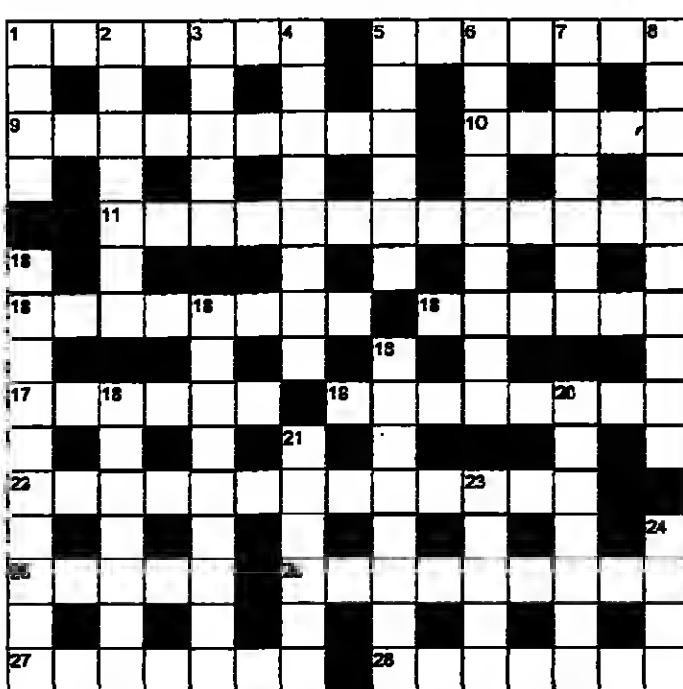
Str Ashley Bramall, politician; Bryan Mosley, actor; Roger Walker, professor of Spanish

Page 23

Blair's Third Way compared with Third Reich; Iran blocks Bahai education; Zimbabwe judges

Page 21

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 21,024



ACROSS

- 1 Share rooms as house turned somewhat cold at first (7).
- 2 Being divorced? On your head be it (7).
- 3 Mark my words (9).
- 4 Getting some bolt-weevil is lethal for cotton (5).
- 5 One's left army job - press one to join up when the heat is on (9,4).
- 6 Use Franklin's experimental method to test opinion (3,1,4).
- 7 I dust, moving round in room (6).
- 8 Caring type has gone to other extremes (6).
- 9 Has round trip to American state (8).
- 10 Hit-and-miss procedure producing miscarriage of justice? (5,3,5).
- 11 At one time I was first, but stopped making an effort (5).

Solution to Puzzle No 21,023

STOCKINET BLAST
T R N A I A C O
R E A D U P V I E W
A T C O U R D E
T W E A K R E F R E S H E R
A I F U O
C O N F I S H G U L P
B E F I T W S S R
M I T E C A S H M E R E
H B B O C
S T A G E H A N D B A G E
T A C T E R B O D
T U B B O A T E N C U R E
B I L L E S S U G N
D U C A L R E S I T E N T

DOWN

- 26 Nothing needing to be paid yet? That's OK (9).
- 27 Chap covering sleeve of coat, for example (7).
- 28 Author labours after one's rejected play (7).
- 29 Policeman is on to drug deal (4).
- 30 Find refuge in boat - that's the most advisable policy (7).
- 31 We hear insect chewed leaf (5).
- 32 Turtle's first at party, a scene of debauchery (8).
- 33 Summary showing one switch in prices (6).
- 34 Put down, say, in similar surroundings (9).
- 35 Accustomed to admit head of security under cover (7).
- 36 Some may be forced inside it - the effect is disastrous (10).
- 37 Cancelling a bit of golf? That's unpleasant (3-7).
- 38 What one discovers - it's not safe to be small (9).
- 39 (Isn't) ever left rumpled in bed? (8).
- 40 Son's taken over helm, it being less stormy (7).
- 41 Unusual piece of information revealing regional dish (7).
- 42 Constant is given for child's second name, actually (2,4).
- 43 Part of rider's equipment, lower if you switch sides (5).
- 44 Some girls quail when in a group (4).

Times Two Crossword, page 48

AA INFORMATION

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HOURS OF DARKNESS

Sun rises 7:22 am Sun sets 5:07 pm
Moon rises 12:34 pm Moon sets 3:40 am
New moon Feb 16
London 5:07 pm to 7:20 am
Bristol 5:17 pm to 7:31 am
Edinburgh 5:07 pm to 7:46 am
Manchester 5:11 pm to 7:35 am
Perthshire 5:33 pm to 7:39 am

NEWSPAPERS SUPPORT RECYCLING

Recycled paper made up
46.6% of the paper used
for UK newspapers in 1997

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General

England and Wales will stay cold with the early frost only slowly lifting. Most places will be dry with some sunshine, the best of it this morning, but there is the chance of a light rain or snow shower across East Angles.

Eastern Scotland will be a little milder than recently with plenty of sunshine. Western Scotland cloudy, some drizzle is possible over the Western Isles and the coast of the mainland. Northern Ireland will have sun with some light rain or drizzle. The Republic of Ireland will be rather cloudy but mainly dry.

Tonight, cloud and rain will slowly spread southwards across Scotland and Northern Ireland into northern parts of England, Wales, and perhaps some western regions later, too, and in these areas it will be a little milder than on recent nights.

The south and east of England will be dry, cold and frosty tonight.

London, SE England, Central S England, Midlands: a hard frost at first and staying rather cold. Dry with some sun. Light northwesterly wind. Max 6C.

E Anglia, E England: cold with a frosty morning. Occasional sunny spells and only the slight risk of a fleeting wintry shower. Moderate NW wind. Max 5C (45F).

Channel Islands, SW England, S Wales: a sharp frost inland and staying chilly. Dry with some sunshine. Light and variable breeze. Max 7C (45F).

N Wales, NW England, Lake District, Isle of Man, Central N England, NE England: a frosty start and staying chilly. Dry with some sunshine but rather cloudy both early and late. Light northwesterly wind backing westerly. Max 6C (43F).

Borders, Edinburgh & Dundee, Aberdeen, Moray Firth: a frosty, sunny start. Spots of sunshine throughout, staying cold. Light to moderate westerly wind. Max 6C (43F).

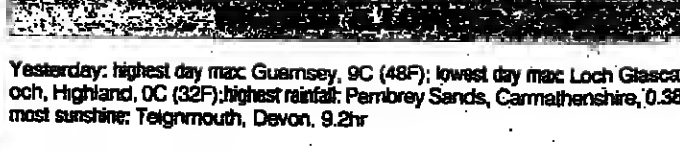
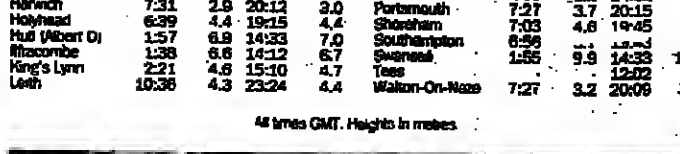
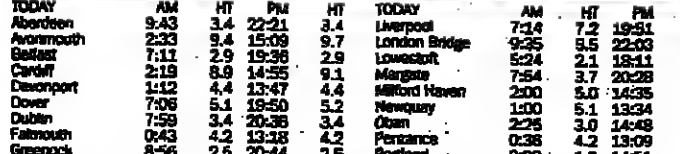
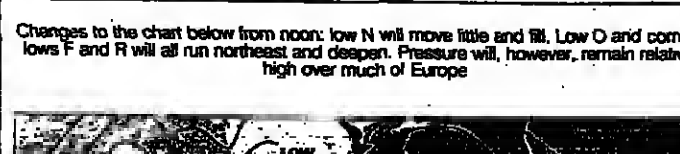
SW Scotland, Glasgow, Argyll, N Ireland: a frosty start. Some sunshine but clouding over this afternoon. Light westerly wind backing moderate southwesterly. Max 7C (45F).

Central Highlands, NE Scotland, NW Scotland, Orkney, Shetland: mostly cloudy with some light rain or drizzle now and then, perhaps sleet at first. Moderate westerly wind backing southwesterly. Max 7C (45F).

Republic of Ireland: rather cloudy, mainly dry, the odd spot of rain in the west. Light northwesterly wind backing southwesterly. Max 7C (45F).

Outlook: cloud and rain in the north and west tomorrow will slowly move southeast during the afternoon and it will get milder. The southeast will stay bright and cold until late on Saturday.

Changes to the chart below from noon: low N will move little and fill, Low O and complex flows F and R will all run northeast and deepen. Pressure will, however, remain relatively high over most of Europe





BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 11 1999

Fall in sterling opens way for fresh base rate cut

By JANET BUSH
ECONOMICS EDITOR

THE pound slumped yesterday after the Bank of England downgraded its growth forecast for this year and left the way open for further cuts in interest rates. Sterling fell to \$1.6295 from \$1.6365 in late trading on Tuesday and also slipped against the euro to 0.6950 to

the euro from 0.6903 on Tuesday. The pound ended at 100 on its effective index against a basket of currencies, down from 100.6 at the finish on Tuesday. At one stage it fell to 99.9. In its latest quarterly *Inflation Report* the Bank said that it now expects growth this year of between 0.5 per cent and 1 per cent, down from its previous forecast of growth somewhat above 1 per cent.

It said that growth would be near zero in the first half of this year. However, the Bank said that the Monetary Policy Committee was not in a monetary policy "pause" after last week's 0.5 per cent cut in base rates to 5.5 per cent. It said that, since its report in November, the world economy had deteriorated, that there had been a more marked slowdown in domestic demand and

that inflationary pressures had eased further. Despite the hope of further rate cuts to stave off outright recession, London shares closed down for the sixth session in a row, undermined by nerves on Wall Street about the overvaluation of technology stocks. There was also some concern in London about impending bank profits announcements.

The FTSE 100 index closed down 0.7 points at 5,770.2, having dipped below the 5,700 at one point during midday trading. Its afternoon recovery came as the Dow Jones Industrial Average registered a gain of more than 50 points after Tuesday's fall of 1.7 per cent that wiped out all of its 1998 gains so far. The Dow then returned to negative territory, posting a loss of nearly 30 points at mid-session.

On British interest rate futures markets traders priced in further rate cuts. Several City economists are predicting that base rates will fall to 4.50 per cent from the 5.50 per cent level reached after last week's cut.

LINKS
WEBSITE: Bank of England
http://www.bankofengland.co.uk

Business Today

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Equity prices:
Unit trusts: 32



The risk business

Foreign banks
continue to be
casualties in China

Page 29

STOCK MARKET MOVES	
FTSE 100	5770.2 (-0.7)
FTSE 100 Share	2.79% (-5.54)
Nikkei	13952.40 (+49.74)
New York	9127.68 (-5.15)
Dow Jones	1217.47 (-1.32)

US RATE	
Federal Funds	5.5% (4.75%)
Long bond	5.35% (5.30%)
Yield	

LONDON MONEY	
3-month interbank	5.5% (5.5%)
Life long oil	118.53 (118.70)
Future (Mar)	

STERLING	
New York	1.6295 (1.6360)
London	1.6290 (1.6360)
€	1.4386 (1.4485)
Sfr	2.2972 (2.3188)
Yen	166.71 (167.22)
£ index	100.0 (100.6)

DOLLAR	
London	1.1331* (1.1307)
Sfr	1.4080* (1.4167)
Yen	114.45* (115.98)
£ index	104.9 (104.9)

NORTH SEA OIL	
Brent15-day(Apr)	\$10.40 (\$10.30)

GOLD	
London close	\$287.75 (\$287.05)

Commentary, page 27

TRW in line to win £4bn battle for Lucas

By PAUL DURMAN

TRW, the American car components group, looked set to win the battle for LucasVarity last night after Federal-Mogul decided not to top its rival's £4 billion offer.

Federal-Mogul said that, after extensive due diligence, it had decided that acquiring LucasVarity would not make financial sense.

TRW, which makes steering systems and air bags, has made an offer of 280p in cash for each LucasVarity share. The company has hinted that it could afford to offer more because of the synergies it sees in combining with LucasVarity, which makes braking, fuel injection and electronic systems.

This made it difficult for Federal-Mogul to come up with a knockout bid. Dick Snell, the Federal-Mogul chairman and chief executive, had proposed an offer of 280p a share for LucasVarity, but half of this was in the form of shares, which were unattractive to UK shareholders. It is thought that Federal-Mogul was unwilling to pay more than 300p a share for LucasVarity.

TRW's offer proposes that Victor Rice, LucasVarity's controversial chief executive, will take over as head of the group's combined automotive operations. It is also expected to make him about £17 million, the bulk of this in shares and options acquired since he took control of Varity's predecessor in 1980.

Mr Snell believed LucasVarity would have made "a very nice strategic fit" with Federal-Mogul's businesses making connecting rods, engine bearings, seals and camshafts. However, Federal-Mogul decided it could not make an offer that would meet its hurdles for economic value-added, cash flow, short-term earnings and debt/equity ratios. LucasVarity was formed from a 1996 merger between Varity and Lucas Industries, one of the best-known names in British engineering. LucasVarity suffered a troubled time on the London stock market. Last November, Mr Rice attempted unsuccessfully to move LucasVarity's domicile and main market listing to the US.

United Utilities pulls plug on £10.7bn Nat Power deal

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY
INDUSTRIAL
CORRESPONDENT

A £10.7 BILLION merger of National Power and United Utilities has collapsed, it emerged yesterday.

United Utilities, the electricity and water company based in the North West of England, is said to have quit the deal that

would have created a giant power company capable of rivaling Scottish Power's customer base and beating those of Eastern Group and PowerGen.

United is thought to have feared that the deal would not have boosted its value. The merger, which was aborted late on Monday, was intended to be a genuine, no-premium tie-up. It would have given National Power a greater inroad into the domestic market and United an important partner as the power industry consolidates. However, it may have run into regulatory obstacles as the combined group would have had generation capacity and two of the biggest electricity supply businesses. National Power already owns the Midlands supply operation.

Both sides were forced to announce the failed merger yesterday because, ironically, the market began to trade on rumours that a merger was imminent on Tuesday afternoon. Both issued short statements to the Stock Exchange confirming the talks and their demise. National Power shares rose 11p to 511p and United Utilities rose 9p to 812p.

The planned merger surprised the City because National Power had signalled that it was keen to buy electricity supply businesses and had not been thought likely to go for a multi-utility. If the generator had been successful with United, it would have taken on electricity distribution, and also water, in which it has no expertise. Nigel Hawkins, analyst at

Williams de Broë, said: "It is a curious situation. It would have been a leap forward for National Power to take on United's distribution arm and a bigger leap to go into water." When National Power bought the Midlands supply business last November in a £180 million deal, it said it wanted to buy other supply businesses. The Government is working on plans to force separation of the two functions and the market is expecting a fresh round of consolidation in the power industry.

National Power, which has been spending prolifically overseas, will soon have a cash boost from the enforced sale of power stations demanded by the Government. A sale of Drax in North Yorkshire would raise more than £2 billion.

The failure of the merger will raise the prospect of United finding a fresh partner or predator. As a purely local company, it is poorly placed to play the increasingly national power supply game. As a multi-utility it also has double exposure to regulatory crackdowns.

National Power may target Scottish and Southern Energy, formed via the merger of Scottish Hydro-Electric and Southern Electricity, or Hyder, the Welsh multi-utility. However, these two are likely to raise regulatory concerns. Although some would hold up Scottish Power as a precedent for large expansion in utilities, the Scottish company has a smaller share of power generation.



BP Amoco has confirmed that 400 jobs — nearly a fifth of the workforce — are to go at its petro-chemical plant at Grangemouth, Stirlingshire. Story, page 26

RIM poised to bid for Mirror

By RAYMOND SNODDY, MEDIA EDITOR

REGIONAL Independent Media, publisher of the Yorkshire Post, is poised to make a formal offer for Mirror Group before the end of this month.

The offer, however, is thought unlikely to be much higher than the 200p a share cash offer already suggested, once RIM completes its due diligence investigation of Mirror's accounts. Some RIM advisers are even suggesting that, on the information available so far, it may be difficult to sustain a 200p offer.

RIM, which is backed by venture capital from Canad-

ver, Deutsche Morgan Grenfell and the Soros Group and headed by Chris Oakley, a former board member of Mirror, is the only company involved in a process of going through confidential Mirror information at the moment.

RIM's main rival, Trinity, the UK's largest regional newspaper group, is not currently carrying out due diligence at the Mirror. It withdrew from talks last month after suggesting an all-share offer worth about 160p at the time.

Trinity is, however, understood to be still interested in

the Mirror and could make an improved offer before the end of the month. A bid from either party is certain to be referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

If RIM wins Mirror Group the strategy will be to concentrate entirely on the newspaper businesses. The Mirror's 20 per cent stake in Scottish Media would be sold and Live TV either closed or sold if a buyer could be found.

A RIM-owned Mirror would also not go ahead with the relaunch of *The Sporting Life* and instead concentrate on trying to

revive the *Sunday Mirror* and *The People* which have both been losing circulation. The Mirror itself has managed modest circulation gains in recent months against a declining market. The aim would be to differentiate the two Sunday papers more with the *Sunday Mirror* moving up-market and *The People* concentrating more on competing as a second title in the *News of the World* market.

The market does not seem to be expecting any large additional premium — the Mirror share price yesterday was unchanged at 201p.

Speed-up plan over pensions

By RICHARD MILES

FINANCIAL regulators yesterday unveiled plans to speed up the payment of redress to an estimated 1.8 million younger victims of the personal pensions mis-selling scandal.

The victims — people who took out a personal pension between April 1988 and June 1994, even though they were entitled to join an occupational scheme — are in line for compensation averaging £4,000. Life insurance companies, however, can offer redress to personal pension policyholders only if it can be proven that the individuals suffered a financial loss by failing to join the employers' scheme.

Faced with the prospect of long delays while the life insurers' unravel policyholders' records, the Financial Services Authority and the Personal Investment Authority have given their support to the industry's proposals to simplify the calcu-

lation for financial loss by introducing a "multiplier test". The FSA has already sought to improve awareness of mis-selling by spending £10 million on a direct mail and advertising campaign, funded by a levy on the industry. The campaign includes the dispatch of some three million letters to possible victims under the heading "R U Owed?"

Regulators have already investigated the cases of policyholders who were aged 35 or over when they were lured into personal pensions, with 388,000 people being offered compensation of £2 billion.

As the scandal has grown to cover more than two million people, industry analysts have upgraded their estimates of the costs to life insurance companies. Current figures put the total bill between £11 billion and £22 billion.

Commentary, page 27

'Changing market' hits Psion

By CHRIS AYRES

SHARES in Psion took a further battering yesterday when the palmtop computer manufacturer said that profits in 1999 would be severely hit by "changing market conditions". The shares fell 115p to 832p.

The shares were hit earlier this week by an alliance between British Telecom and Microsoft, which threatened Psion's Symbian joint venture with Ericsson, Nokia and Motorola, the mobile phone handset manufacturers.

Psion's latest problems are at its Dacom subsidiary, which produces PC cards for laptop computers. The company has seen a massive fall in demand for PC cards that allow laptops to access the Internet, because laptop manufacturers have been building the cards into their products.

Tempus, page 28

Research chief replaced at SB

By PAUL DURMAN

SMITHKLINE BEECHAM yesterday replaced its head of research and development after only 18 months in the job.

David U'Prichard is succeeded by Tadataka Yamada — head of the American healthcare services business whose sale for \$2 billion (£1.2 billion) was announced on Tuesday.

It was suggested that Dr U'Prichard, who joined from Zeneca, was a "lone" worker who was out of place amid the openness shared by SB's senior team. Although he had a decent record of bringing new products through the development pipeline, there were doubts about his leadership abilities.

Unlike Dr U'Prichard, Dr Yamada is already a member of the SB board, and in 1997 was paid £444,000, including a £131,000 bonus. Dr Yamada, 53, was born in Tokyo, but has spent much of his career in the US, where he attended Stanford and the New York Uni-

versity School of Medicine. SB said he has published more than 200 scientific articles, many on peptide biology.

Dr Yamada will report to Jean-Pierre Garnier, SB's chief operating officer. George Poste continues in his more strategic role as chief scientific and technology officer, reporting to Jan Leschly, chief executive.

Dr Yamada joined SB's board in 1994. Dr Garnier said: "Tachi has a rare blend of business and scientific experience that make him extraordinarily well-qualified to lead our research and development team."

He had responsibility for Diversified Pharmaceutical Services, the US drug purchasing manager, which SB is selling for \$700 million, a deal that will incur a £446 million post-tax loss. He also oversaw Clinical Laboratories, the blood and urine-testing business where the group is selling a 70 per cent stake for \$1.025 billion.

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Insurance firm sees less risk in property

By MARIANNE CURRIE, INSURANCE CORRESPONDENT

LIBERTY International, the life insurance company chaired by Donald Gordon, the South African insurance businessman, said yesterday that the prospects looked brighter for property than for financial services in Britain.

Unveiling results for the year ended December 1998, Mr Gordon said profits before tax and exceptional items had increased by 14 per cent from £111.2 million to £126.5 million.

Liberty International is part of Mr Gordon's Liberty Life group and has a financial services division and the 72 per cent owned subsidiary, Capital Shopping Centres. Liberty Life is expected to merge with Standard Bank Investment Corp of South Africa.

David Fischel, managing director of Liberty International, said he was still keen to expand the group's financial services operations in the UK, but was wary of the damage that fluctuating economic conditions could inflict on banking stocks.

He said: "We looked at National Provident Institution (NPI) when it announced its intention to demutualise and placed an indicative bid, but we did not get past the first stage.

"In current market conditions a big deal is unlikely,"

he said. "The yields on property are currently 6 per cent while those on bonds are 4.4 per cent. At the moment we think we can do better in the property market where there is less risk."

In his statement to shareholders Mr Gordon said 1999 "seems to be shaping up for problems arising from Latin America, China and particularly Hong Kong which is holding on relentlessly to its dollar peg. Europe appears perilously close to deflation."

"Only the United States economy seems to be immune, and subject to ongoing prosperity, with Wall Street flirting with dangerously high levels supported by unbounded optimism."

He said that while a degree of caution was understandable in the light of the property crash of the late 1990s, "the prospects for UK property outperforming other UK asset classes over the forthcoming period seem strong."

A final ordinary dividend of 10.2p (1997: 9.6p) lifted the total to 19p from 17.6p. The shares fell 12.5p to 450.5p yesterday.

Last week Mr Gordon announced that he was retiring from Liberty Life but would continue as chairman of Liberty International and CSC.



Kings of the Castle: SAB's Graham Mackay flanked by Nigel Cox, left, and Malcolm Wyman

SAB eyes £4bn London listing

By DOMINIC WALSH

SOUTH African Breweries, which yesterday unveiled plans for a £4 billion London listing, is expected to spin off its hotel and casino interests to focus on its core beer business.

SAB, which will enter the FTSE 100 index, owns Southern Sun, one of Africa's biggest hoteliers. It operates 75 hotels, owning the South African rights to the Holiday Inn and Inter-Continental brands under an agreement with Bass.

Graham Mackay, SAB's chief executive, admitted that floating off some or all of Southern Sun was a possibility. However, no decision would be taken until the five casino licences for which it has applied — it has already won three — have been awarded by the South African gaming authorities.

An exit from hotels and casinos would be a natural progression for a company that over the past two years has divested eight businesses worth R1.4 billion (£140 million).

SAB, whose group finance director is Nigel Cox, with Malcolm Wyman the corporate finance director, is the world's fourth-largest brewer. It has 37 breweries in 18 countries and 98 per cent of the South African market. Its lagers, including Lion and Castle, sell for about 30p a pint in its home market.

Up to £200 million will be raised in the placing, organised by Robert Fleming, Cazenove and Goldman Sachs, to boost its central and eastern European brewing operations, notably in Poland. It is also building a brewery in Russia.

City diary, page 29

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Alcatel hopes to agree stock swap

ALCATEL, the French electricals company, has held talks with the Government in Paris over the possibility of a swap of its 44 per cent stake in Framatome, the state-controlled nuclear power plant construction company, for a 20 per cent interest in Thomson-CSF, the defence contractor. Alcatel is believed to want to convert its share of Framatome into a more liquid investment which can be sold. Alcatel already owns 16 per cent of Thomson-CSF and a swap of its Framatome shares for Thomson-CSF stock would potentially put up for grabs a 36 per cent stake in a key French defence company.

Such a move could create an opening for the French Government to revive moves to consolidate the European defence sector. An enlarged Alcatel stake looking for a home would be a useful bargaining chip for Thomson-CSF when negotiating with prospective partners. The French Government retains 42 per cent of Thomson-CSF and has already conceded that it will reduce its interest in the defence contractor if necessary. Alcatel is also thought to have pursued another option of swapping its Framatome shares for assets, in particular the electronic connectors business of Framatome.

Eclipse Blinds in talks

ECLIPSE BLINDS, a maker of components for household blinds, responded to a 52 per cent leap in its share price by admitting that it was in talks that may lead to an offer for the company. The shares rose 30p to 87.5p. Ted Black, chairman, said the discussions were at a "very early stage" and that because the company is highly geared and it had expanded by acquisitions, a parent with "deep pockets" would be "useful". The company issued a profits warning in November, which was followed by cost-cutting measures, including redundancies.

Decline at Viglen

VIGLEN TECHNOLOGY, the computer company chaired by Alan Sugar, said that a "competitive" PC market was to blame for a decline in sales and average selling prices. Pre-tax profit for the six months to December 31 was £2.5 million, against £1.8 million for the comparable five-month period last year, on a turnover of £47 million (£40.2 million). Earnings per share were 1.32p (1.02p); the interim dividend of 0.4p is maintained. Mr Sugar said: "With our focus now firmly aimed on education, the Government's initiatives in schools should create substantial opportunities."

Select acquisitions

SELECT APPOINTMENTS, the recruitment group, yesterday announced two overseas acquisitions in the accounting and finance sectors, sending its shares 5 per cent higher to 616.5p. The company has bought a 75 per cent interest in Link Recruitment Group which has five offices in Australia for A\$11.6 million (£4.5 million) while in The Netherlands, Select has acquired a 60 per cent interest in Camcock Chase Capital, a provider of professional credit control managers, for 4.2 million guilders (£1.3 million).

Newscom in for P&S

THE QUEUE forming to buy Portsmouth & Sunderland Newspapers lengthened yesterday when News Communication & Media, the group formerly known as Southern Newspapers, said it was in talks to buy the group, Newscom, based in Southampton and with papers throughout the South of England, said that it had applied to the Department of Trade and Industry to have its interest in P&S referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission alongside Johnston Press and Newsquest, who are also stalking the group.

Doyle approached

DOYLE HOTEL GROUP, the privately owned Irish hotel operator that is in takeover talks with its quoted rival, Jysys Hotel Group, is understood to have received a number of approaches from other parties. The approaches, believed to include one from Starwood Hotels & Resorts, the US group, are said to have been prompted by delays to the signing of a deal with Jysys, which is understood to have offered about £160 million. However, Doyle claimed last night that "discussions with Jysys are ongoing" and it hoped to unveil a deal by the end of the month.

JSB ahead of budget

JSB SOFTWARE TECHNOLOGIES, which produces software to stop employees looking at Internet sites not related to their work, yesterday said that its first interim results, since its flotation on AIM last June, were ahead of budget. The company recorded a pre-tax loss of £373,000, for the six months to November 30, compared with a profit of £5,000 for the year ended May 31, 1998. JSB said that since flotation it had invested heavily in marketing its *sur/CONTROL* product in the US. JSB forecasts a full-year loss of £1.1 million. The shares fell 12.5p to 230p.

US sales boost P&U

PHARMACIA & UPJOHN, the Swedish-American drugs company, lifted fourth-quarter profits 29 per cent to £238 million (£145 million), helped by strong US sales, and reaffirmed that it expected double-digit earnings growth in 1999 and beyond. Global sales rose 9 per cent to £1.85 billion. The company took \$144 million in pre-tax charges, of which \$92 million came from a previously announced restructuring and \$52 million from the sale of most of its nutrition business to Fresenius. The charges were the final portion of a \$450 million restructuring programme initiated in 1997.

Citigroup drops Visa

CITIGROUP, the world's biggest financial institution, yesterday resigned from Visa International's board and will move most of its credit cards to Mastercard. Citibank, a subsidiary, is one of the largest credit card issuers with just under \$70 billion (£43.2 billion) in credit card receivables. John Reed, co-chairman of Citigroup, previously said he would try to remove brand names from cards issued by his bank. Visa is the world's biggest credit card brand. Mastercard will let Citibank put its name as the main logo on the front of its cards. (Bloomberg)

UK tax harmony plans suffer eurobond blow

FROM CHARLES BREMMER IN BRUSSELS

BRITISH hopes of watering down plans for EU tax harmony suffered a blow yesterday when the European parliament refused to exempt London's lucrative Eurobond market from a draft law to impose a standard levy on savings accounts across the Union.

The Strasbourg assembly voted against amendments that would have spared the Eurobond market, worth up to £2 trillion, from the planned measure, which is aimed at curbing tax evasion by EU citizens who hold savings and investments in other EU states.

The parliament's opinion is non-binding on the EU's law-making council of finance

ministers, but the solid backing for a standard tax will carry political weight when the law is considered later this year.

The assembly also voted for the proposed rate of taxation to be set at 15 per cent rather than the 20 per cent suggested by the European Commission.

The British Government has said that it will use its veto to block the so-called withholding tax if it is put to a vote without the exemptions. It argues that the market will simply move outside the EU, costing thousands of jobs for the City, which is the world centre for the offshore bonds.

The withholding tax is one

American acts to end dispute

AMERICAN AIRLINES is going to court to end a pilot dispute that has led to the cancellation of 40 per cent of its flights (Oliver August writes from New York).

Many pilots called in sick before the coming US Bank Holiday weekend in an apparently co-ordinated effort. Some 1,000 flights are affected as a result. The pilots had been encouraged by union leaders to call in sick.

The dispute was sparked by American Airlines' purchase of Reno Air, a low-cost carrier. The pilots said they feared for their jobs once Reno Air was integrated into the company.

Virgin in talks with Cadoro

BY MARTIN WALLER

THE Virgin Group is in takeover talks with the financially troubled Cadoro, which trades as the Capolito Roma menswear chain. Shares in Cadoro were suspended yesterday at 1.5p at the company's request.

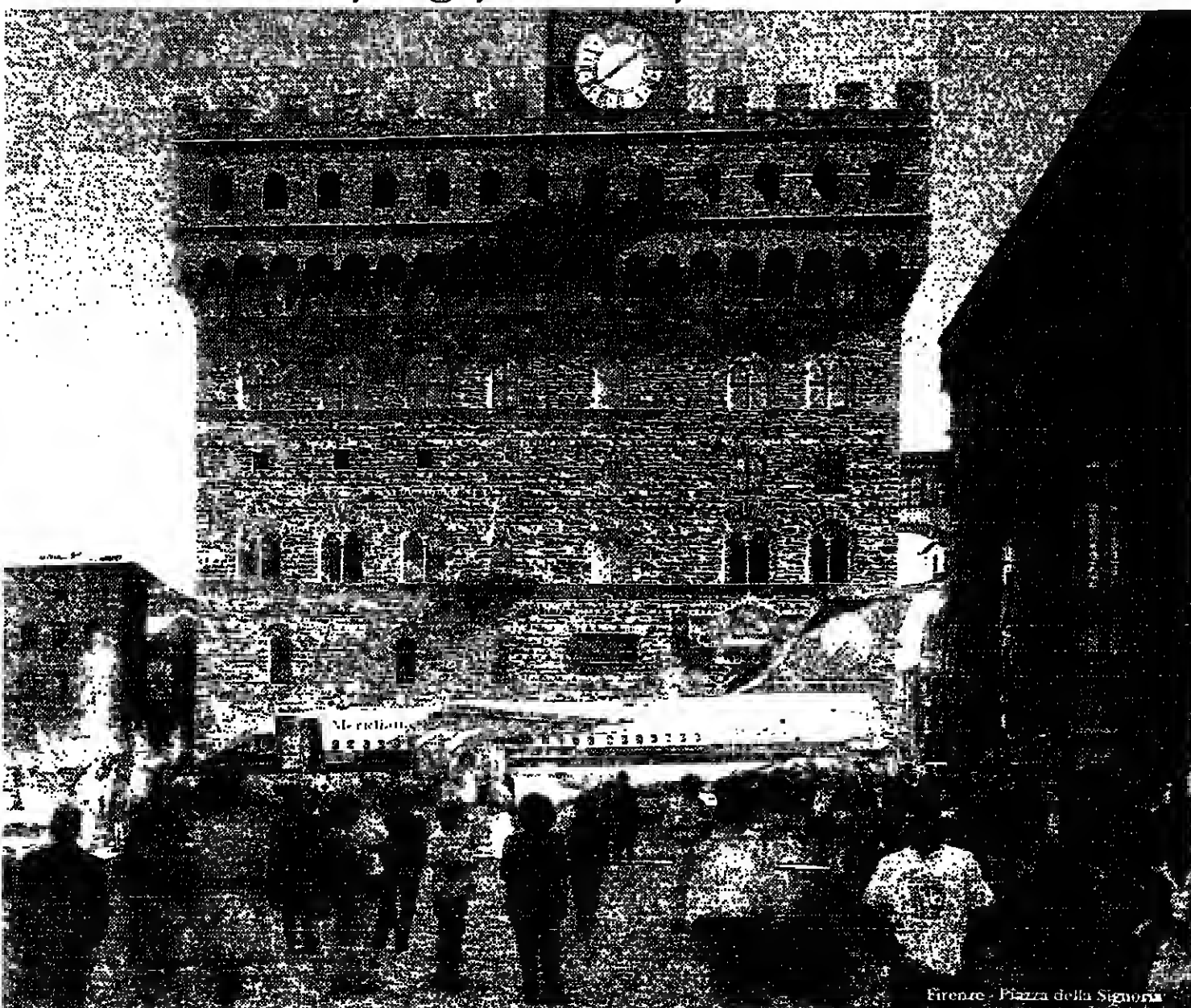
Richard Branson, the head of the Virgin Group, owns 10 per cent of Cadoro — which sells the Virgin clothing range — through backing a £2.4 million rights issue last August. A spokesman for Virgin said yesterday that an approach had been made to Cadoro.

Cadoro, which was formed through the reverse takeover by Capolito Roma of Owen & Robinson, said in December that it had encountered severe

cashflow and trading difficulties. It got into financial problems when it began converting its Footold sports stores into branches of Capolito Roma. There are now 23 Capolito Roma stores.

Despite last year's rights issue, the company, which is chaired by Egon von Greyerz, the former Dixons director, had to begin attempts to raise more money at the end of last year after it became concerned about its ability to fund working capital. In the six months to August 15, it recorded a pre-tax loss of £1.5 million. It admitted that like-for-like sales were down 17.5 per cent in the first few weeks of the second half.

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'No question' of prison for Maxwell

KEVIN MAXWELL, son of the disgraced tycoon Robert Maxwell, was told yesterday that there is "no question" of his being committed to prison for failing to co-operate with Department of Trade and Industry inspectors (Jon Ashworth writes).

Mr Maxwell, 39, risks being held in contempt for refusing to talk to inspectors investigating the 1991 flotation of Mirror Group Newspapers.

At the High Court, where he was appealing for a judicial review, he said he would co-operate if the DTI contributes to his legal costs, which he says he cannot afford.

Though Mr Maxwell's application was rejected, the judge, Sir Richard Scott, reserving judgement, assured him that he would not be sent to prison if a contempt finding was made against him.

BP Amoco to shed 400 in Scotland

By CARL MORTIMIST

BP AMOCO is laying off 400 staff at its Grangemouth petrochemical plant only three months after the oil company revealed plans for a £500 million expansion of the facility with the creation of 2,500 jobs.

The Scottish job cuts are likely to be a prelude to a shakeout at BP Amoco worldwide as the company attempts to protect its margins from the effect of a price collapse in both oil and petrochemicals.

The job cuts, of mostly administrative posts, form part of a review of BP Amoco's staffing levels, which the company blamed on the "most difficult operating environment in recent times". Low oil and chemical prices have forced the company to go far beyond the 6,000 job cuts indicated when BP launched its takeover of Amoco.

BP Amoco said yesterday that it hoped to achieve most of the job reductions by voluntary severance or early retirement but admitted it could not rule out compulsory redundancies. In November the company announced the construction of a pipeline to link the facilities at Grangemouth and Hull that would create 2,500 jobs over three years.

EXCHANGE RATES

	Bank	Bank
Australia \$	2.61	2.44
Austria Sch	20.80	19.14
Belgium Fr	63.24	56.26
Canada \$	2.552	2.364
Danish Dkr	0.8789	0.8074
Denmark Kr	11.30	10.47
Egypt £	5.75	5.14
Finland Mk	5.11	4.36
France Fr	8.91	8.13
Germany DM	2.978	2.736
Greece Dr	13.50	9.54
Hong Kong \$	12.25	12.25
Ireland £	127	107
Indonesia Rp	1,678	1,289
Ireland P	1.078	1.098
Israel Sh	6.99	6.32
Italy Lit	2961	2724
Japan Yen	201.22	184.29
Malta £	0.963	0.904
Netherlands Gld	3.362	3.067
Norway Kr	13.04	12.10
Portugal Esc	301.06	270.05
S. Africa Rd	10.58	9.67
Spain Ptas	250.94	222.14
Sweden Kr	13.64	12.71
Switzerland Fr	2.452	2.234
Turkey Liras	571.45	530.67
USA \$	1.758	1.593

Rates for small denomination banknotes only as supplied by Barclays Bank. Different rates apply to travellers' cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

Vaux acts with find new direc

Train companies railroad Prescott



COMMENTARY by our City Editor

For a man whose career is about to come to an abrupt end, John O'Brien was in amazingly good spirits yesterday. Under his tenure as rail franchising director, Britain's railways have slid into such sharp decline that half the services are now less punctual than under British Rail and at twice the cost to the country: the bill, this year, is £1.98 billion.

So why is Mr O'Brien so sanguine after handing out such huge subsidies for such abysmal performance? His answer is that he has been powerless to do anything about it.

Sadly, he's right. Since the railways began their punctuality decline, John Prescott has uttered terrifying public threats about how he will stand for none of their nonsense. But not even the pugilistic Prescott has been able to swipe the grin from the rail companies' faces. As yesterday's bizarre array of penalties and prizes shows, the rail companies are financially untouchable.

Mr Prescott only has himself to blame. In Opposition, he was threatening privatisation with such intent that the likes of Stange and National Express would not go near British Rail unless their money were guaranteed immune from political interference. The result is 25 contracts, guaranteed under European law, which promise that Mr Prescott must keep his paws off their bonuses — no matter how much he objects to them. Neither can he do anything about the mini-

mal penalties that can be inflicted if they make a complete botch of running the trains.

Take FirstGroup, the first UK rail company to be threatened with legal action by a city council because its service was so abysmal. It collected an £8,000 punctuality bonus yesterday. But what about Mr Prescott's promise that he will not tolerate poor punctuality, and his threat to claim back the "keys" to franchises?

This, as the train companies know very well when they hear it, is all nonsense. When they gather at his summit on March 25, they will dutifully take some earache, safe in the knowledge that he can do as little as Mr O'Brien. Their money is safe.

For public relations reasons than any real need to pass the buck, the rail operators like to blame Railtrack for their poor performance. Railtrack is far from blameless: it now takes pride in being responsible only for 50 per cent of delays. That, admittedly, is an improvement.

But the real problem with the railways is the financial framework which eschews commercial common sense. The operators are not given incentives to make major improvements in their performance and so they do not. This is the key and it will prove

as much of an obstacle to the forthcoming Strategic Rail Authority as it has to Mr O'Brien.

If Mr Prescott wants the Government to have any real power over the railways, he has no option but to rewrite the contracts with the operators, giving them the longer franchises they want in return for much harsher performance targets. Otherwise, his weapons are restricted to surveys, summits and hot air.

Jilted Nat Power needs right partner

It is cruel indeed that, so close to Valentine's Day, National Power should be jilted by United Utilities. But perhaps the early break-up is just as well, for United was an odd choice of partner for the generator. National Power is keen on expanding its customer base as its generating capacity has contracted. The former mighty electricity producer will soon be a shadow of its former

self after the Government ordered a second round of power station sales.

Last November it advanced its ambitions by buying the supply division of Midlands Electricity. Then it said it was looking at other supply businesses but did not want to get saddled with distribution, an understandable point of view. The growth potential in sending electricity buzzing around the wires is severely limited or non-existent, depending on whether you are an optimist, and the prospect of a new regulatory price review hardly adds to its attractions.

But here we are only months later and National Power was on the verge of taking on not only a distribution division but also a water business, something in which it has not a trickle of expertise. It could be that the generator was planning to sell on the bits it did not need, but that may have been a lengthy procedure and good prices would have been far from certain.

It is not the first time that Na-

tional Power's actions seem at odds with its intentions. Four years ago the generator had shown little interest in buying a regional electricity company until its rival PowerGen went for Midlands Electricity. It then put in a bid for Southern. Both bids were blocked by the DTI's vaguely defined fears over competition in the power industry.

PowerGen turned but National Power bounced back, deciding it was now no longer interested in a regional business after all. Then, a couple of years ago, it changed its mind again, focusing on trying to strike alliances with power suppliers.

When PowerGen bought East Midlands Electricity last year, National Power made its move on the supply half of Midlands. Last year came reports of a failed merger with another large energy company.

National Power's overseas expansion is yielding slow-growing fruit. But its action at home is causing bemusement. Next time it gets close to the merger altar, it

must have the ring ready. It must find a more suitable partner and ensure that it is not jilted. Stomping off, intimating that it was never really that keen on the wedding, is no longer an option if the company intends to convince investors that it has a credible strategy.

FSA gets first past the post

The odds were probably against it, but the actuarialies of the pensions industry have come up with a proposal that should hasten the end of the pensions mis-selling debacle. Without some such sensible idea, this scary drama would threaten to rival *The Mousetrap* with its longevity. No wonder that the regulators have leapt at the idea. The FSA will have enough to keep it busy without the pensions problem being a permanent fixture in the pending tray.

Expousing a "ready reckoner" approach to determining who deserves redress and how much they should get will undoubtedly result in the pensions firms paying out to some undeserving cases. But the firms have already accepted that the whole process is biased in favour of the custom-

ers rather than the pension providers. The industry now seems to have acknowledged that there is no point in fighting against the presupposition of guilt. Now it would like to bring the sorry episode to a close and get on with selling all the new products that the Government is kindly encouraging on to the market.

That the previous Government was the greatest mis-seller of personal pensions is an argument that the industry has deemed unhelpful to its cause.

Yet, despite the patronising advertising campaign with the ice-cream man, the public is proving remarkably reticent in demanding redress. A simpler set of calculations may offend actuarial sensitivities but should encourage people to fill in the forms and claim their rewards.

Out of a trough

THE misfortunes of PIC International, the pig breeding rump of Dalgety, inspire many a farmyard metaphor: eggs and baskets come to mind. Investments that are at the mercy of the hog cycle are not for those of a chicken disposition. But the directors of PIC are a brave bunch. Pig prices may be dismal now — in the US the slaughter price is less than a third of the cost of getting a piglet to that stage — but PIC is looking to the future. There may be some who worry about its implications but PIC thinks genetic agriculture abounds with exciting prospects for pigs.

BSkyB to offer free Net access

By RAYMOND SNOODY, MEDIA EDITOR

BRITISH Sky Broadcasting, the satellite television venture, is to offer free Internet access to all its digital subscribers. BSkyB wants to use the Internet to drive both digital television and interactive services as a way of reaching its target of six million subscribers by 2003.

Yesterday BSkyB announced a marketing alliance with AOL, the Internet access company. Initially, BSkyB will provide content such as the Sky Sports website to AOL. In return, AOL will market Sky-Digital to its subscribers.

Mark Booth, BSkyB chief executive, yesterday set a new ambitious target for Sky-Digital — one million digital subscribers by October.

BSkyB, in which News International, owner of *The Times*, has a 40 per cent stake, said it had signed more than 350,000 digital subscribers by the end of January — a better performance than expected. Of these, 34 per cent were new Sky subscribers.

Mr Booth said: "Sky-Digital is off to a superb start. It has exceeded our projections and those of the marketplace."

BSkyB shares rose 60½p to 474½p on the back of the subscriber numbers and a demonstration of Open... the home shopping and banking service to be launched later this year.

Somerfield, Argos and Dixons said yesterday that they were joining Iceland, GUS, HSB and Woolworths in the virtual shopping mall.

The investment in the new digital services and higher programming costs meant that in the six months to December 31 there was a 59 per cent drop in pre-tax profits to £53.2 million although the interim dividend is being maintained at 2.75p.

For the first time Sky channels were in more than seven million homes in the UK and Ireland with an overall increase of 191,000 subscribers in the three months to December 31.

Carlton to build up ONdigital

By RAYMOND SNOODY

MICHAEL GREEN, chairman of Carlton Communications, yesterday told shareholders the company planned this year to build on the "promising" start made by ONdigital, the commercial digital terrestrial television service launched in November.

Carlton and Granada each own 50 per cent of the digital terrestrial venture.

Mr Green told the annual meeting that Carlton had "made a good start to the year". Television was performing well, with successful formats such as *Who Wants to be a Millionaire* and dramas such as *Peak Practice* helping ITV to a 41 per cent peak-time audience share in January.

Carlton also announced it is launching an Internet service for retailers and publishers of home entertainment. Retailers will be able to link their web sites to a dedicated Carlton site that will handle orders, credit card payments, stock sourcing delivery and fulfilment.

Medeva profits decline

By PAUL DURMAN

MEDEVA, the pharmaceuticals group, yesterday declared it had a "robust" view of its future despite the continuing decline in profits from its best-selling product. Bill Bogie, chief executive, said: "I don't feel vulnerable. The share price has been low for six months, but no one's come for us."

Although Medeva makes substantial profits, its shares, at 100½p, trade at only 6¼ times last year's earnings — a fraction of its rivals.

The reason is the fall in profits from methylphenidate, the treatment for hyperactive children. Sales fell 39 per cent to £68 million last year, causing Medeva's profits from its central nervous system drugs to fall by £41 million to £52 million.

Pre-tax profits fell by £51.6 million to £59.3 million. Total sales declined to £321.4 million (£355.4 million). A final dividend of 3.75p a share will lift the total by 5 per cent to 5.75p.

Tempus, page 28

Vaux acts swiftly to find new director

VAUX GROUP, the North East brewer and hotel operator, has moved quickly to fill the post of finance director left vacant by this week's shock dismissal of Neal Gossage along with the chief executive, Martin Grant (Dominic Walsh writes).

Neil Chisman, the respected Stakis finance director, and Mike Thompson of Marston Thompson & Evershed have already been approached to sound out their interest in the post. Both men are looking for new jobs after takeover bids

for their respective companies.

Mr Chisman, who has been with Stakis for ten years, is to leave the company after completion of a takeover by Ladbrokes. Mr Thompson was left without a job after Marston's lost a bid battle with Wolverhampton & Dudley Breweries.

A surprise candidate for the job is Tim Walker, a former Vaux finance director. Vaux has already appointed Peter Catesby, head of Vaux's Swallow Hotels arm, as the new group chief executive.

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Our champions become Big Brother

One of the last bastions of resale price maintenance is under fire. After long agitation, the Director-General of Fair Trading has asked the Restrictive Practices Court to stop manufacturers fixing minimum prices at which retailers may sell all those non-prescription medicines most of us reach for when we suffer from headaches, colds or things too embarrassing to mention.

From the late 1950s onward, the Institute of Economic Affairs and others campaigned for free price competition in retailing to bring prices of branded goods down. This classic campaign for free market forces brought together aggressive entrepreneurs and traditional economists. They fought a long battle against entrenched forces big and small who wanted a quiet, stable life.

The forces of order had a genuine if emotional case based on keeping local shops, ensuring responsible trading and good service. But fixing retail prices was mainly an instrument of manufacturers' power.

The lure of price cuts won and resale price maintenance was outlawed 35 years ago. Only a shrinking group of exceptions was permitted by the Court.

The latest to go was books. In the end, publishers gave up without a struggle. Books were exempted to help literary small bookshops to survive but mainly to use high-priced best sellers to subsidise others that had little hope of selling well, let alone making a profit. That gradually changed, as books fought back against television, reading became a growth sector of the leisure industry and prizes made literary novels more viable. Most of all, Waterstones and other specialist chains prospered by stocking lots of titles, to serve this new market. The old trade restrictions were not needed.

Over-the-counter medicines raise like issues. Consumers need, rela-

ble, skilled local prescription pharmacists, who need decent profits on other lines to survive. But Boots the Chemist is nearly everywhere these days and local chemists are doing better by serving the expanding markets for all sorts of health goods.

Defenders still claim that a quarter of chemists shops will close if prices were freed. Aggressors such as Asda claim that consumers are paying £300 million a year more than they need, much of it on items such as vitamins.

In those terms, it is virtually an open-and-shut case. But that is not the whole story. The balance of power has been transformed. Even the most powerful manufacturers of branded groceries are now on the back foot in Britain. But their power to manipulate prices and boost margins has not been dissipated. It has been seized by immensely powerful retailers, especially the big four grocers: Tesco, Sainsbury, Safeway and Asda.



GRAHAM PEARSON

Generations of consumers who grew up after the Resale Prices Act have much to thank the supermarkets for. First came lower prices, then greater choice. So we do now. Own-label goods, pioneered by Sainsbury and others from Marks

& Spencer's example in clothing, allowed people to buy goods of comparable quality to leading brands at much lower prices. They introduced novel products such as muesli and wines from new provinces to ordinary families.

Success has, however, built the combined market shares of the big four to what competition authorities call a "complex monopoly" and economists call oligopoly. They share at least two thirds of the grocery market, depending on how you define it. And as markets have neared saturation, competitive instincts have turned to abuse of monopoly power.

Own brands are now routinely positioned as full-margin brand leaders. When a manufacturer launches a successful new brand, you may rely on the own brand equivalent to arrive at a similar price a few months later, accompa-

nied by a rise in the shelf price of the demoted manufacturer's brand. What was once a stimulus to innovation is now a deterrent.

Passing off own brand goods as well-known brands has become a way of life. One or two manufacturers have been brave enough to mount successful court cases but the practice, which amounts to theft of intellectual property, continues largely unchecked. Only the biggest international food manufacturers such as Nestlé can afford, for instance, to patent their own new shapes of bottle.

Once they captured the "excess" profits of manufacturers, or farmers, some supermarkets began to have in the textbook fashion of oligopolists. Most have gradually learnt not to compete seriously with each other on price, in spite of their constant claims to the contrary. The last "price war" was aimed

at keeping out new entrants. Occasionally, however, little skirmishes that amount to little more than game-playing play havoc with small shops. Not long ago, baked beans were priced down to 5p a tin, below cost, as each vied to be most consumer friendly. Lately, some have sold bread at 7p or 9p a loaf, less than half normal price.

Such loss leaders may be within the honoured traditional practices of supermarkets, which still like to think of themselves as the cheeky chappie on the market stall. The effect, however, is that of predatory pricing: to drive out competition in order to jack up prices later on. If there are victims, they will be Britain's remaining small shops, which cannot afford a monopolist's cross subsidies.

The Director-General of Fair Trading should look at these practices before he focuses on medicine prices. Otherwise he can guarantee that his victory in the court will lead to exactly the sort of irresponsible trading the die-hards predict. Selling panaceas as 5p loss leaders is not healthy competition.

Investors count the cost of lasting lure of the Orient

Risks mount for foreign banks as casualties continue in China, writes Alasdair Murray

For investors gathered in London last week to China's answer to Howard Davies the message was simple: despite all the turmoil in Asia and the collapse of one of the country's most prominent investment companies, it is business as usual.

Zhou Zhengping, chairman of the Securities Regulatory Commission, reassured his audience of City financiers and businessmen that China remains committed to stable exchange rates and will continue to use expansionary policies to maintain a healthy economic growth rate. Foreign investors should also be tempted back into the Chinese equity markets by the country's promised radical overhaul of its securities laws which will clarify ownership structures and improve financial reporting laws.

Although no one would expect a senior Chinese official to say otherwise, Mr Zhengping's morale-boosting comments, superficially at least, contain more than a hint of truth. China managed to trot out respectable growth figures last year, with GDP rising at 7.8 per cent compared with a Government target of 8 per cent. The Chinese Government has promised to raise fixed investment by 12 per cent this year to keep GDP growth bubbling along at around 7 per cent. China's Central Bank is sitting on massive currency reserves of \$145 billion (£68 billion) with which to fight a financial crisis. Despite the well-documented problems across Asia, the country recorded a hefty current account surplus of \$30 billion last year, with foreign direct investment modestly increasing to \$45 billion.

Leading American companies are still sufficiently lured by the Orient to vote China joint second in a list of favoured investment sites in a recent survey.



Devaluation of the yuan coupled with a fundamental overhaul of the economy may be the only solution to China's problems

It is hard, however, to reconcile this bullish picture with the market pandemonium prompted by just one passing reference in the Chinese press to devaluation at the end of last month. That the brief allusion to the dreaded D word — in an article scripted by a young journalist and tucked away in China's sole English language national — should so shake the market, speaks volumes for the depth of nervousness over China's economic prospects.

Only an emergency distancing operation conducted by Dai Xianglong, the governor of the Chinese Central Bank, succeeded in — temporarily at least — calming the markets.

Analysts have long been aware that there is a credibility gap between the official data and the reality of an economy suffering massive overcapacity and a government struggling to impose badly needed structural reform without causing social discontent. However, it has taken the very real collapse of the Guangdong International Trust and Investment Company (GITIC) finally to bring this message home to investors.

GITIC was forced into bankruptcy last month with debts

conservatively estimated to total \$4.4 billion. At its peak, the company seemed to embody all the potential riches of this booming province of Southern China. Its collapse has highlighted everything currently wrong with Chinese capitalism: uncontrolled over-investment in the property sector; a structure so opaque that the liquidator still has not discovered the full extent of its liabilities; a business strategy driven by politics, not economics, and more than just a whiff of corruption.

For the first time in recent years, foreign banks have been burned in China. Government nods and winks that investing in the myriad of International Trusts and Investment companies (ITICs) would prove as secure as sovereign lending have not been honoured. Instead, the Chinese Government has washed its hands of GITIC.

International banks are understandably angered by the Chinese Government's attitude, but they must share some of the blame. Normal risk analysis appears to have been thrown out of the window, with the banks not only seduced by promised profits but desperate to win favour with

the authorities to guarantee future expansion.

Nor is GITIC likely to prove the last casualty. Another Guangdong company, Guangdong Enterprises, is teetering on the brink with debts of nearly \$3 billion. An ITIC in the Manchurian city of Dalian also recently defaulted on a \$20 million certificate of deposit jointly owed to a number of European banks. Japanese banks have claimed that the company's predicament is effectively in default of loans worth \$2 billion. Chinese authorities reject these claims.

There is no doubt, however, that more of China's 240 ITICs are likely to go under, leaving foreign banks counting the cost. The Chinese Central Bank estimates ITICs are holding foreign debts of \$8.1 billion. Independent observers claim the real figure is twice as much.

The GITIC collapse has finally stung the Chinese Government into action, as much as to reduce its own exposure to the ITICs as to appease private investors. While wholesale overhaul has been promised, to date only five smaller ITICs have been earmarked for closure and 13 others for restructuring. The action appears to be too little too late to prevent the fallout being felt elsewhere in China's economy. The two main stock markets, in Shanghai and Shenzhen, have fallen to all-time lows while foreign bank lending premiums are beginning to increase.

Equally worrying, for a Government obsessed with preserving social order, there is growing evidence of the human cost of China's economic problems. In Shenzhen, a group of 150 investors has taken the unusual step of asking for a licence to protest against a brokerage firm that they claim has defrauded them of \$56 million. Elsewhere in the country there has been a spate of bombings that have killed more than 31 people and injured 100 during the last month.

The Chinese Government is faced with an economy in desperate need of a radical restructuring programme that will inevitably lead to even larger social costs. External analysts estimate the real unemployment rate stands at 15 per cent, with some 170 million rural workers "surplus" to requirements. Reforming the nationalised state

sector is likely to increase the number of jobless by 30 million and this figure does not take into account the fact that Chinese companies have run up inventories worth \$500 billion, or half the total economy, in a desperate attempt to meet output targets. As a result, prices have fallen for 15 months in a row and it is difficult to see how domestic demand can be sufficiently stimulated to absorb this kind of slack.

The banking sector is also in serious trouble, with bad loans conservatively estimated to total \$200 billion or 20 per cent of GDP. The Government has promised to package off the bad loans to newly created independent agencies, a plan which Deutsche Bank believes will cost some \$430 billion.

China's Government is claiming it will achieve 7 per cent growth this year. Analysts, however, forecast that the country will be lucky to record a growth rate of 4 per cent.

This is why the issue of devaluation is never likely to be far away. For all the well-rehearsed anti-devaluation arguments — the increased costs of servicing foreign debt; the risk of renewed currency contagion across Asia and, not least, the recent appreciation in the yen — devaluation will remain a tempting quick-fix policy lever. With interest rates down to low levels and China already subsidising exporters through a tax rebate, the only alternative is the lengthy and potentially socially disruptive task of a fundamental overhaul of the domestic economy.

A close reading of recent Chinese pronouncements on the subject shows that the Government, not surprisingly, has kept its options open. Lu Mai, chief executive of China Development Research Foundation, a think tank with close government links, late last month ruled out a devaluation now but suggested that the yuan should move in a wider currency band once the other Asian economies have settled down. The Governor of the Chinese Central Bank has been careful only to rule out devaluation while China is still running a huge trade surplus.

For all China's desire to avoid the fate that befell the rest of Asia, in the end it appears not a question of if, but when, the country devalues.

Boards pass over the IT conundrums

Flick through the annual report of any large American high-tech company and you are likely to see a profile of its "chief technology officer" or "chief information officer".

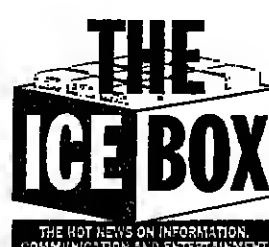
These creatures are usually former senior technicians who have at some point in their career decided to change out of their white coat and into a pin-stripe suit. In the US, being chief technology officer (or "cto") is only slightly less impressive than being chief executive or finance director.

In Britain, however, such executives are still a rather rare breed. Only companies that specialise in technology — such as Psion, the palmtop computer manufacturer, and a clutch of tiny Cambridge-based start-up ventures — are likely to employ technical experts at board level. Even then, it is usually only to please American investors.

But with technology becoming more important — and more complex — by the day, the lack of chief technology officers on the boards of British companies could become a problem. Indeed, it could lead to some of the major strategic advantages of technology being overlooked.

Research by the Gartner Group, published this week, seems to support this theory. The research, based on a survey of European and US businesses with annual sales of more than \$250 million (£150 million), suggests that crucial technology issues are still being debated between the IT and telecoms departments of large companies.

These issues could include how best to set up an Intranet or which mobile phone



company should be used by employees. Companies also face the key question of how to use the Internet to their advantage. According to the Gartner Group, most European companies believe that these issues should be dealt with by their IT departments. After all, many British board members are accountants by training, and find IT issues boring and complicated.

Is this situation likely to change in the near future? Peter Kirwan, editor of Computing magazine, says: "We are seeing a generational shift happening, but there's a lot of older people who need to get out of the way first."

THE US may end up with a different technological standard for third-generation mobile phones to Europe and Japan, according to Siemens, the German engineering giant. The situation would be a disaster for the global mobile phone market, which hopes growth will be fuelled by a single worldwide standard. But the US and Europe cannot agree. "There's always room for a compromise," Volkert Jung, executive director of Siemens, said. "But at the moment, it looks like a battle."

CHRIS AYRES

Yves of change

YVES-THIBAUT de Silguy, the all-conquering father of the euro, has been spotted around Paris in an unusual posture. On his knees, and with his hands clasped imploringly in front of him.

Let me explain. De Silguy, one of two French Commissioners, sees his five-year term of office expire at the end of the year. He is desperate to stay and see through the rest of the great euro experiment.

His problem is France's peculiar



De Silguy is forced to plead for his job with the powers that be

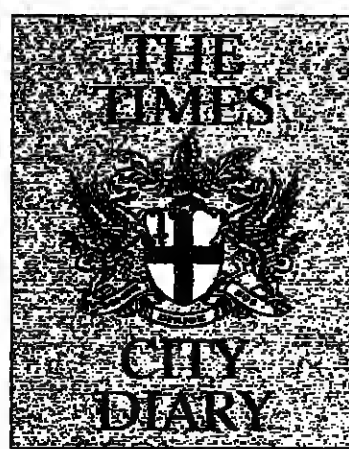
power-sharing arrangements, which require one Commissioner to be Socialist and the other Gaullist. The Socialist half, Edith Cresson, is not only at retirement age but is so badly emired in domestic trouble that she cannot hope to survive. She has even lost the support of Lionel Jospin, her fellow Socialist and successor as Prime Minister.

It is unthinkable for the Socialists to lose their Commissioner but for de Silguy to carry on. But no one can think of two possible successors. So de Silguy has been reduced to pleading for his job on personal visits in recent days both to Jospin and to Jacques Chirac, the French President and a fellow Gaullist.

"It's a very, very fluid situation," says my Paris source. "Chirac is uncertain, and Jospin's in a quandary."

MY ATTENTION is drawn to the William Hill prospectus and the list of non-executives. One is Michael Blackburn, a former partner at Deloitte B Touche. I idly study his previous form. He has a few directorships, but two stick in the mind.

He was in at the start of Aerstructures Hamble, one of the worst market flotations of the 1990s. And he was at Blue Arrow, which ended a few careers in the 1980s. Still, life's a gamble, isn't it?



Just a sniffer

BIZARRE scenes at the launch of South African Breweries' £4 billion flotation in London, where City journalists are handed a prospectus on arrival and told they will have to hand it back before they leave. It is some American nonsense to do with the SEC, which insists the document can only be given to bona fide investors.

So fleeing was the glimpse afforded that we might have missed news of directors' generous relocation expenses from South Africa. Two get £100,000 a year for three years, a third a total of £150,000. Graham Mackay, chief executive, says: "You have to realise that in South Africa the price of a five-bedroom house with a swimming pool and an acre of land in a good

area would get you little more than a lock-up in Bayswater."

I TRUST Allied Domecq, waiting patiently to do a much-needed deal with Seagram, the Canadian drinks group, has seen the latest edition of Fortune.

There is a lengthy interview with Edgar Bronfman Jr, the 43-year-old family scion who took Seagram into Hollywood and music. He doesn't mention drinks once.

Instead Bronfman explains how entertainment is going to come right. He sold his du Pont shares to pay for his entry into Hollywood, and du Pont shares nearly doubled, says Fortune. He sold out of Time Warner before those shares started to climb. He bought MCA shortly before Steven Spielberg left.

So the joke in Hollywood is that Bronfman is infatuation's answer to "Wrong Way" Corrigan. He was a US flier in the 1930s who left New York for California, and landed in Ireland instead.

Cape of hope

FOR the price of a lock-up in Bayswater, John Aspinall's son is selling a villa in South Africa, the haunt of pop stars and super-models and voted one of the world's top 50 houses to rent. Cost, £1 million, according to Christie & Co, the estate agent.

Very little of the above is true, except for the sale by Bassa Aspinall of the Villa Romelia, just outside Cape

Town, but it is all in the estate agent's brochure anyway.

That headline price of £1 million is actually £800,000. The villa was in the top 50 in the *Condé Nast Travelers Guide*, the estate agent tells me — except that it wasn't.

And as to pop stars and super-models, well, Naomi Campbell dropped in once but never stayed. Ditto Mark Thatcher, the only other celebrity anyone can think of. Celebrity? Christie mutters engagingly about "agent's poetic licence". Still, the villa looks nice.

MARTIN WALLER
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Rail reform urged as operators escape lightly

By FRASER NELSON

THE Government faced fresh calls to scrap the regulatory regime of financial penalties governing Britain's privatised railways yesterday as it emerged that some of the worst performers have escaped with minuscule fines.

John O'Brien, the rail franchising director, said he was powerless to alter the regime, which charged £7.35 million in punctuality fines over a 12-week period yet handed out £276 million in subsidies.

FirstGroup, which was threatened with legal action because of delays on its North Western Trains franchise, has been given an £8,000 punctuality bonus — even though its service continued to slide over

the past three months of 1998. Chiltern Railways — which has seen the number of late trains on its London to Birmingham route double since April last year — has been charged a total of £171,000 in punctuality penalties yet received an £8.9 million subsidy.

This comes after three of its managers agreed to sell out to John Laing, the construction company, in a deal that will net them £500,000 each.

Mr O'Brien said: "The incentive regime is not a question of how I feel about the train companies' performance. The payments I make are a matter of contracts. They are not discretionary." He emphasised that, for the first time, Opra is receiving more penalties than it is handing out in bonuses under the regime.

Gerald Corben, chief executive of Railtrack, a long-standing critic of the financial architecture of the railway system, said: "The current incentive regime works for Railtrack — if we eliminated all delays caused by us, our profits would be up by £100 million."

Mr Corben, who has called for the introduction of a scheme where rail operators' subsidies are linked to performance, added: "But it was designed for an era where there was no passenger growth. To use the same system during the growth we are seeing now is an enormous challenge."

Yesterday, Opra confirmed last week's report in *The Times* that named Chiltern, Cardiff and Thames trains as the three sharpest fallers in performance over 1998.

National Express's ScotRail franchise, which has again been named the most punctual service in the UK, has so far picked up £4.93 million in bonuses for the 36 weeks to December 12.

Stagecoach's South West Trains franchise was hardest hit — paying £3.26 million for the same period in which its level of delayed trains increased by 22 per cent.

Stagecoach intends to pass on much of these charges to Railtrack, which has to pay up if the delays were caused by infrastructure problems.

The incentive regime was written before privatisation took place. Under European law, the Government cannot change the system without approval from the train companies.

Mr O'Brien, who is to step down from his post, said: "I don't have the power to change the payments, because these are bilateral contracts. They can be changed, but only with the train operators' consent."

Almost every contract lasts until at least 2003, with some stretching to 2015.



John Prescott, Deputy Prime Minister, was in the City yesterday at the launch of trading in Channel Tunnel Rail Link 2028 and 2038 bonds to raise £1.65 billion; while £1 billion will be raised with the launch of shorter-dated 2010 bonds. Demand for the bonds, which carry a government guarantee, was said to be substantial. The link will run to Waterloo.

WINNERS AND LOSERS			
BIGGEST PENALTIES			
		OPRAF PENALTY	FIXED SUBSIDY
Stagecoach	South West Trains	£3,259,000	£43,447,846
Go-Ahead	Thames Trains	£1,915,000	£17,734,154
Connex	Connex South Eastern	£1,577,000	£60,521,538
National Express	Central Trains	£1,259,000	£87,566,538
Prism	Cardiff Railway	£1,142,000	£12,962,769
BIGGEST BONUSES			
		OPRAF BONUS	FIXED SUBSIDY
National Express	ScotRail	£4,928,000	£86,277,462
MTC Trust	Northern Spirit	£1,168,000	£87,534,538
Prism	LIS Rail	£454,000	£17,865,000
FirstGroup	Great Eastern	£457,000	£10,005,231
Connex	Connex South Central	£714,000	£38,963,769

PIC International passes on interim dividend

By ROBERT COLE, CITY CORRESPONDENT

PIC INTERNATIONAL, the pig breeding technology firm, will not pay an interim dividend this year as the company gave warning of massive oversupply problems in the market for pork that continue to disrupt its business.

PIC, which does not farm pigs itself but supplies breeding stock to pork farmers, yesterday said that the pork market was leading to a sharp decline in orders.

The company incurred operating losses in the six months to December 31, though interest credits meant that PIC

managed to report a pre-tax profit of £2.1 million — that, however, is a 94 per cent fall from its figures for the same period in 1997.

Brian Baldock, chairman, said the conditions in the pig meat industry were the worst for 50 years. Prices of pork have plummeted as farmers switched production facilities away from beef two years ago, when the BSE scare was at its peak. The oversupply has been exacerbated by a fall in demand from Russia.

Mr Baldock said that the price of pork had fallen "well below" the costs of production. PIC is all that remains of Dalgety, the food group that was radically restructured with large segments of the business sold off. Shares in PIC shed 10 per cent yesterday to close at 62p and are now trading at barely a quarter of what they were last summer.

For the first half of 1997 PIC paid a 6p dividend. Mr Baldock said a decision about the final dividend for this year will be made in September, when prospects will be clearer.

Tempus, page 28

US rivals join bid battle for Field paper group

By PAUL ARMSTRONG

FIELD GROUP, the paper and packaging company, is at the centre of a bidding war after Shorewood Packaging Corporation of the US yesterday unveiled a counter offer. Shorewood has bid 350p a share for the UK group, forcing Field's directors to withdraw their backing for the offer of 320p a share made three weeks ago by Chesapeake Corporation, also an American paper group.

Field is now recommending its shareholders accept Shorewood's offer, which values the company at £211.4 million.

though there is believed to be a strong chance that Chesapeake will return with a higher bid, Chesapeake would say only that it was considering its position in the light of Shorewood's offer.

Field shares were trading at 227p the day before it entered takeover talks with Chesapeake. They closed yesterday at 356p, up from 343p previously.

Both suitors view Field as an ideal launching pad into Europe, enabling them to be part of the industry's worldwide consolidation. Field, in

turn, is keen for the financial backing offered by the American bidders. The paper and packaging sector has struggled on the stock market for some time, making it difficult for Field to raise the equity needed to underpin an expansion into Europe.

Keith Gilchrist, Field's chief executive, said both bidders offered strategic advantages to his company. "It comes down to price at the end of the day," Mr Gilchrist said. "There is not a lot to choose between them."

Tempus, page 28

Stansted 49% growth helps to lift BAA

BAA, the operator of Britain's main airports, said that it handled 7.6 million passengers in January, a 7.3 per cent increase on the same time last year. The big growth areas in the month came at Stansted, a base for many of the no-frills budget airlines, and from flights to Ireland.

Traffic at Stansted rose 49 per cent, although the Essex airport carries about a tenth of the volumes of Heathrow, where passenger growth was up 3.3 per cent to 4.3 million. Gatwick passenger volumes grew by 10 per cent, while Glasgow and Edinburgh airports clocked growth of 4.7 per cent and 6.5 per cent respectively. The biggest segment of BAA's passenger figures, scheduled European flights, grew by 7.9 per cent while passengers to the Irish Republic were up by 14 per cent. UK domestic passenger growth came in at only 3.6 per cent.

Bid hits Focus's costs

FOCUS DYNAMICS, the engineering group, yesterday gave warning that "significant costs" were incurred in defending the company from a takeover bid by Corporate Resolve, an Ofex-listed investment firm. The offer for the entire share capital of Focus was announced in November and withdrawn last week. Sir James McKinnon, chairman, said: "Focus Dynamics has been forced to incur significant costs defending itself from an unsolicited and unwelcome offer from a bidder whose ability to fund the offer was unconvincing at best."

Ferguson in £13m sale

FERGUSON INTERNATIONAL is selling its food, personal care and beverage division to Labelling Dynamics, a European manufacturer of self-adhesive labels, for £13 million. The division, which also includes a flexible packaging and a foil packaging business, made an operating profit of £1.3 million in the year to February 28, 1998. However, difficult trading conditions mean it will record a significant loss this year. Ferguson proposes to sell its remaining businesses and return funds to shareholders. The shares were unchanged at 41p yesterday.

Fishers hooks rival

FISHERS INTERNATIONAL, the loss adjuster, has continued on the acquisition trail by confirming that it is to buy its smaller rival, Pycraft & Arnold, the AIM-quoted company. The recommended cash and shares offer values Pycraft at 69p a share, or £10.8 million. A full cash alternative is worth 67.06p. Fishers said the deal will bring significant cost savings and stronger management to a business with increased critical mass.

Heal's shares rise 10%

SHARES in Heal's were up 10 per cent yesterday after the home furnishings retailer said sales in the 20 weeks to January 30 were up 4 per cent. Martin Boase, chairman, said the performance during the Christmas and winter sales periods was very satisfactory against the difficult retail climate. He expected "significantly enhanced sales" at its flagship store in central London from the end of this month when the refurbishment of its main furniture trading floor will be finished.

Rexam expands in US

REXAM, the packaging company, has agreed to buy Sussex Plastics Inc for £19 million. Sussex, which had sales of £18.5 million in 1997 and net assets of £7.9 million, is based in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and is a custom injection-moulding manufacturer of plastic packaging, primarily for the cosmetics market. Lorand Spysers-Duran, the current chief executive of Sussex and a part-owner, will retain his post while the business is merged with Rexam's beauty packaging operations.

Changing face of reporting

Anthony Carey praises standards set by the winners of this year's published accounts awards

IT is scrumptious. That is the judges' view of Bulmers' annual report, the newly announced winner of the smaller company section of the 1999 Stock Exchange and Chartered Accountants Annual Awards for Published Accounts.

The report leads off with a lively front cover illustration of an inviting glass of cider together with the caption "the world's leading cider maker". There's no mistaking the market the company is in, nor its place in it. Inside, Bulmers explains concisely that it will continue to measure its success in terms of market leadership, product quality, increasing shareholder value and rewarding employment opportunities for its employees. The report's real success, though, lies in its discussing these issues in an informative way that offers an insight into Bulmers' corporate culture and its relationship with the providers of its human and financial capital. The report also reads as a seamless whole rather than appearing to be a series of disjointed sections written by a number of different people, an unfortunately frequent occurrence.

The company's performance relative to the market is

discussed and some percentage figures provided of sales volume increases. This information is put into context with a helpful analysis of market trends affecting the cider industry with reference made to the sale of alcopops, taxation, advertising and changing consumption patterns.

The chairman seems to encapsulate Bulmers' philosophy when he says that "your company has been trading for 110 years. We believe in taking the long view in the establishment of our orchards, in the building of brands and in our approach to investment at home and overseas, but above all we seek to ensure that we have the right people in the right place now and in the future."

Far more space is devoted to employee issues in this report than is the norm, with a discussion on employee development. Bulmers' new Employee Learning Centre and the role of the longstanding Employee Council. The names of the 77 employees who have been with the company for more than 30 years are also included.

Boots, the winner of the larger company section of this year's reporting awards, has, like Bulmers, strong family



Anthony Carey says top reports help to establish benchmarks

roots and headquarters in the heart of England. It, too, devotes a section of its winning report to its people and, in addition, has others on the environment and the community.

Boots states on the first page of its report that its long-term goals primarily focus on gener-

ating strong cashflows and superior returns for shareholders. It has calculated that the value of payments made to shareholders in the five years to March 1998 in the form of dividends and one-off payments totalled £1.9 billion which, when added to share price movements, was

equivalent to a return of 128 per cent over the period, or 18 per cent on an annualised basis. Most unusually, details are also provided of how this measure of performance compares with that in ten peer companies. Boots ranked fourth behind SmithKline Beecham, Tesco and GUS, but ahead of, for example, Kingfisher, Marks & Spencer and Sainsbury's, not to mention Sears.

As highlighted recently in *The 21st Century Annual Report*, the whole area of annual report disclosure outside the audited financial statements is likely to increase significantly in importance. It embraces a wide range of overlapping topics including non-financial measures of performance, the value of a company's intangibles, shareholder value and future prospects as well as social, employee and environmental reporting. This vital element of the annual report is now overdue for a co-ordinated review, having developed over time in a higgledy-piggledy fashion.

The winning reports for 1999 help to establish benchmarks of what is achievable.

Anthony Carey is director of the Centre for Business Performance of the Institute of Chartered Accountants.

□ The 21st Century Annual Report is available on 071-620-8624 or on the Internet at: icaw.co.uk

Sleeper derailed at Willesden Junction

IT IS not often that you find that a youthful indiscretion has come to light in the disclosure documents produced during the negotiation of a merger.

However, the impending disappearance of the firm of Moores Rowland into BDO Stoy Hayward has triggered just such an instance. Once upon a time I served my articles with what was then Edward Moore & Sons. It was a firm whose great days were already past. But the full realisation of this had not really sunk in. They had been founded in 1866. They had been the great auditors and advisers to the printing and brewing industries. Sir Edward Cecil Moore himself had been Lord Mayor of London in 1922 and president of the English ICA in 1923. His portrait still hangs above the staircase in the institute's headquarters in Moorgate Place.

But by the time I was employed there as an articled clerk, the grandeur was much reduced. The firm had missed its opportunities. Clients had merged and gone for growth, but the firm had not followed the same route. The really big listed clients had either gone or were about to go.

There was an apocryphal story that the firm had been approached just after the war by an up-and-coming bunch of people called Cooper Brothers who fancied a merger with Moores to bring them respectability. But Moores was supposed to have considered them mere upstarts and told them that they had no future. If you look at the portrait of Sir Edward you can see that even then complacency had set in.

On the other hand, such a firm was a terrific place to learn about business and industry. In your three years you worked everywhere from huge printing works to stockbrokers, from charities to breweries, from engineering works to small private clubs. The insight you gained into how different businesses worked was immense. And it was also fun. Or it could often be fun.

There was a terrible place, an engineering company out in the wilds of Willesden Junction, to which everyone dreaded being exiled. And that was where my downfall took place. The managing director claimed that he had found me asleep in the boardroom. I have always denied this. Early signs of rigor mortis might well have set in as I perused the bought ledger, but complete collapse had

not occurred. It didn't matter. I was removed from the audit. My fellow students reckoned this a considerable triumph. But the partners thought it a disgrace.

It is this tale from the early career of someone who was saved from accountancy by journalism that has cropped up in the documentation of the merger that means that the Moores name will vanish on March 1. It was hardly isolated behaviour. At what was known as the Articled Clerks' Dinner, one fellow student, who these days is a senior City specialist in regulation, was progressing speedily around the balcony of what is now the Institute of Directors on his hands and knees. He came to an abrupt halt against an obstacle. He looked up and found the senior partner looking down. He was asked what he was up to. "Playing trains, sir," he replied and carried on.

On another celebrated occasion an audit manager, who has again gone on to great things, found it oppressively hot on a June afternoon after a visit to the pub at lunchtime. He was found by the client with a knotted handkerchief on his head, no shirt or tie, his feet in a cooling bowl of water and the radio commentary from Wimbledon clamped to his ear. There is a long history to all this. Ian Brindle, now world-wide chief of risk management at PricewaterhouseCoopers, will tell you of the time that late in the evening when playing cricket with ruler and ball of paper he was caught at wide mid-on by Dunlop's finance director as he put his head round the door to see how the auditors were getting on.

The demise of the last vestiges of Edward Moore & Sons tells us that an era has passed. Business organisations that fail to adapt to changing circumstances will always vanish. The failure of the Moores, then, was not to see the firm in the context of the rest of the profession and of the trends that their clients were following. To bask off a past reputation. What they should have been doing was what we just for staff were doing — observing client companies and working out for ourselves why some succeeded and others failed. And where their strategies were leading them. Long live BDO Stoy Hayward.



ROBERT BRUCE

Bowman pointed the way at PW

THERE is an irony in the humiliation and firing of the Coopers half of the newly merged PricewaterhouseCoopers over their past work for the late Robert Maxwell's empire. For Price Waterhouse always refused to have anything to do with the overweight media mogul. The firm's senior partner through the crucial years was Sir Jeffery Bowman. He never forgot his experiences in his early days as a partner when the firm was appointed as inde-

pendent reporting accountants to Pergamon during the takeover battle that subsequently drew the famous Department of Trade opinion that Maxwell "was not a person who could be relied upon to exercise proper stewardship of a publicly quoted company".

Bowman did most of the leg work for the investigation. And for ever after, whenever Maxwell bought a company that Price Waterhouse audited, the firm would quietly re-

sign. Now they wish that Coopers had done likewise. "I know we are not supposed to refer to Coopers as 'them'," mused one PW partner this week, "but for a few days we are going to."

Testament...

COLIN SHARMAN, the globe-trotting worldwide chairman of KPMG, has obviously not updated his CV for a while. Fellow leaders at the World Economic Forum jam-boree in Davos the other week

were startled at Sharmar's entry in the event's directory, known locally as "The Bible". He was listed as "Chairman Elad, KPMG and Ernst & Young (merger)". We all thought the merger had been called off a year ago. Maybe no one has got Sharmar off a plane long enough to tell him.

...of youth

THE English ICA has at last caught up with the post-modern ways of the youth of this coun-

ROBERT BRUCE

Resilient performance by equities

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

1998/99				1997/98			
High	Low	Company	Price	High	Low	Company	Price
ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES							
100	98	Adnams Ltd	100.00	100	98	Adnams Ltd	100.00
100	98	Adnams Ltd	100.00	100	98	Adnams Ltd	100.00
BANKS							
100	98	Barclays Bank	100.00	100	98	Barclays Bank	100.00
100	98	Barclays Bank	100.00	100	98	Barclays Bank	100.00
FOOD MANUFACTURERS							
100	98	Asda Stores	100.00	100	98	Asda Stores	100.00
100	98	Asda Stores	100.00	100	98	Asda Stores	100.00
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS							
100	98	British Airways	100.00	100	98	British Airways	100.00
100	98	British Airways	100.00	100	98	British Airways	100.00
BREWERY, PUBS & REST							
100	98	Beck's Brewery	100.00	100	98	Beck's Brewery	100.00
100	98	Beck's Brewery	100.00	100	98	Beck's Brewery	100.00
ELECTRICITY							
100	98	British Energy	100.00	100	98	British Energy	100.00
100	98	British Energy	100.00	100	98	British Energy	100.00
BUILDING MATERIALS							
100	98	British Gypsum	100.00	100	98	British Gypsum	100.00
100	98	British Gypsum	100.00	100	98	British Gypsum	100.00
ELECTRONIC & ELECT							
100	98	British Telecom	100.00	100	98	British Telecom	100.00
100	98	British Telecom	100.00	100	98	British Telecom	100.00
CHEMICALS							
100	98	British Chemicals	100.00	100	98	British Chemicals	100.00
100	98	British Chemicals	100.00	100	98	British Chemicals	100.00
ENGINEERING							
100	98	British Engineering	100.00	100	98	British Engineering	100.00
100	98	British Engineering	100.00	100	98	British Engineering	100.00
CONSTRUCTION							
100	98	British Construction	100.00	100	98	British Construction	100.00
100	98	British Construction	100.00	100	98	British Construction	100.00
INSURANCE							
100	98	British Insurance	100.00	100	98	British Insurance	100.00
100	98	British Insurance	100.00	100	98	British Insurance	100.00
INVESTMENT TRUSTS							
100	98	British Investment	100.00	100	98	British Investment	100.00
100	98	British Investment	100.00	100	98	British Investment	100.00
DISTRIBUTORS							
100	98	British Distributors	100.00	100	98	British Distributors	100.00
100	98	British Distributors	100.00	100	98	British Distributors	100.00
ENGINEERING VEHICLES							
100	98	British Engineering	100.00	100	98	British Engineering	100.00
100	98	British Engineering	100.00	100	98	British Engineering	100.00

1998/99				1997/98			
High	Low	Company	Price	High	Low	Company	Price
MINING							
100	98	British Mining	100.00	100	98	British Mining	100.00
100	98	British Mining	100.00	100	98	British Mining	100.00
LEISURE & HOTELS							
100	98	British Leisure	100.00	100	98	British Leisure	100.00
100	98	British Leisure	100.00	100	98	British Leisure	100.00
PROPERTY							
100	98	British Property	100.00	100	98	British Property	100.00
100	98	British Property	100.00	100	98	British Property	100.00
TELECOMMUNICATIONS							
100	98	British Telecom	100.00	100	98	British Telecom	100.00
100	98	British Telecom	100.00	100	98	British Telecom	100.00
TRANSPORT							
100	98	British Transport	100.00	100	98	British Transport	100.00
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OIL & GAS							
100	98	British Oil	100.00	100	98	British Oil	100.00
100	98	British Oil	100.00	100	98	British Oil	100.00
OTHER FINANCIAL							
100	98	British Financial	100.00	100	98	British Financial	100.00
100	98	British Financial	100.00	100	98	British Financial	100.00
RETAILERS, FOOD							
100	98	British Retailers	100.00	100	98	British Retailers	100.00
100	98	British Retailers	100.00	100	98	British Retailers	100.00
WATER							
100	98	British Water	100.00	100	98	British Water	100.00
100	98	British Water	100.00	100	98	British Water	100.00
RETAILERS, GENERAL							
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100	98	British Retailers	100.00	100	98	British Retailers	100.00
PHARMACEUTICALS							
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100	98	British Pharmaceuticals	100.00	100	98	British Pharmaceuticals	100.00
BRITISH FUNDS							
100	98	British Funds	100.00	100	98	British Funds	100.00
100	98	British Funds	100.00	100	98	British Funds	100.00
SHORTS (under 5 years)							
100	98	British Shorts	100.00	100	98	British Shorts	100.00
100	98	British Shorts	100.00	100	98	British Shorts	100.00
LONGS (over 15 years)							
100	98	British Longs	100.00	100	98	British Longs	100.00
100	98	British Longs	100.00	100	98	British Longs	100.00
UNDATED							
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100	98	British Undated	100.00	100	98	British Undated	100.00
INDEX-LINKED							
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100	98	British Index-Linked	100.00	100	98	British Index-Linked	100.00
MECHANIS (5 to 15 years)							
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100	98	British Mechanisms	100.00	100	98	British Mechanisms	100.00
SUPPORT SERVICES							
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100	98	British Support	100.00	100	98	British Support	100.00

1998/99				1997/98			
High	Low	Company	Price	High	Low	Company	Price
PRINTING & PAPER							
100	98	British Printing	100.00	100	98	British Printing	100.00
100	98	British Printing	100.00	100	98	British Printing	100.00
MINE							
100	98	British Mine	100.00	100	98	British Mine	100.00
100	98	British Mine	100.00	100	98	British Mine	100.00
PROPERTY							
100	98	British Property	100.00	100	98	British Property	100.00
100	98	British Property	100.00	100	98	British Property	100.00
TELECOMMUNICATIONS							
100	98	British Telecom	100.00	100	98	British Telecom	100.00
100	98	British Telecom	100.00	100	98	British Telecom	100.00
TRANSPORT							
100	98	British Transport	100.00	100	98	British Transport	100.00
100	98	British Transport	100.00	100	98	British Transport	100.00
OIL & GAS							
100	98	British Oil	100.00	100	98	British Oil	100.00
100	98	British Oil	100.00	100	98	British Oil	100.00
OTHER FINANCIAL							
100	98	British Financial	100.00	100	98	British Financial	100.00
100	98	British Financial	100.00	100	98	British Financial	100.00
RETAILERS, FOOD							
100	98	British Retailers	100.00	100	98	British Retailers	100.00
100	98	British Retailers	100.00	100	98	British Retailers	100.00
WATER							
100	98	British Water	100.00	100	98	British Water	100.00
100	98	British Water	100.00	100	98	British Water	100.00
RETAILERS, GENERAL							
100	98	British Retailers	100.00	100	98	British Retailers	100.00
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PHARMACEUTICALS							
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BRITISH FUNDS							
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SHORTS (under 5 years)							
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LONGS (over 15 years)							
100	98	British Longs	100.00	100	98	British Longs	100.00
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UNDATED							
100	98	British Undated	100.00	100	98	British Undated	100.00
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INDEX-LINKED							
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MECHANIS (5 to 15 years)							
100	98	British Mechanisms	100.00	100	98	British Mechanisms	100.00
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SUPPORT SERVICES							
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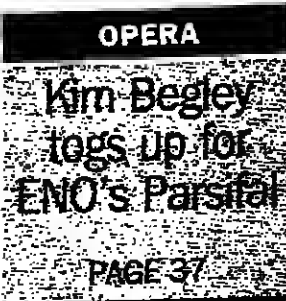
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At head
MOVIES



The director Jack Hill: A chance encounter with the adoring Quentin Tarantino rescued him from a 20-year semi-obscurity

Tarantino calls him the master

It is perhaps little wonder that Jack Hill appears to be in a permanent state of bemusement. Until a short time ago the director of such 1970s "blaxploitation" films as *Coffy* and *Foxy Brown* was living in relative obscurity in Los Angeles. He hadn't directed anything since 1981 and his reputation was confined to a few select aficionados.

That is probably how it would have remained, but for the intervention of one ardent admirer. At a recent retrospective of Hill's work, none other than Quentin Tarantino pitched up and declared himself to be Hill's No 1 fan. "He had his hands full of posters and albums and he wanted me to autograph them. He was just like a real avid fan, really brilliant. He said: 'Man, I just love your dialogue'."

Hill was disarmed and delighted, and continues to be. But it transpired that he was unable to return the compliment. "I had heard of Tarantino and knew that he had won the Cannes award for *Pulp Fiction*, but I'd never seen any of his movies," says Hill.

Such have been Tarantino's publicly fulsome compliments that Hill's work is undergoing something of a resurgence. Tarantino has since declared that his own *Jackie Brown* is a straightforward homage to Hill's *Foxy Brown*, with the *Jackie* of the title being a direct reference to Hill. What's more, the lead role in *Foxy Brown* was taken by the *Foxy Brown* actress Pam Grier. "It's given me a new visibility," Hill says wryly. "Critics wouldn't even look at my films before, let alone review them. Now they call them Post-Modern."

CINEMA: The director Jack Hill is suddenly in demand again, after a public homage by a very famous disciple. Janie Lawrence met him

Tarantino has put his money where his mouth is. Tomorrow Hill's 1975 film *Switchblade Sisters* is being re-released here by Tarantino's distribution company, Rolling Thunder. Plainly this turn of events has taken the 66-year-old American by surprise. For

ton. It's on TV. Nothing's hidden any more."

Certainly the violence of *Switchblade Sisters* is greatly softened by what appears to be its entertainingly high camp content. Such lines as "Everybody's gotta be in a gang — it just ain't healthy to lone it. You dig?" are delivered in a world where the ketchup quota is less than a contemporary episode of *Casualty* and the nastiness of the characters is directly proportionate to the width of their bell bottoms.

"I had heard of Tarantino but not seen his films"

"It was supposed to be a teenage *Clockwork Orange*," Hill says. "A fantasy about cute blondes in street gangs. In the 1970s audiences

liked it, but today they love it."

It was never Hill's intention to be a film director. As a musician studying at UCLA his goal was to write film scores. Then he found himself helping on other student productions, notably alongside his classmate Francis Ford Coppola. "Francis had not the slightest question in his mind that he would be the hottest director in Hollywood. He directed all his energies towards that. I never even had an agent."

Hill is rather vague, but it seems that for the past 18 years his main bread and butter has been writing TV scripts. Although he is now ready for what he terms "re-entry", he has no desire to contribute any further to the genre that Tarantino so reveres. In fact, pushed to name a film that he has recently enjoyed, Hill comes up with *Shakespeare In Love*.

"I find so many things offensive in modern films. I don't know where to begin. I walked out on *Once Were Warriors*. I heard students saying it was great art. But what's so wonderful about a man beating up his wife? The scripts that are being submitted to me now are generally so wild and brutal that I can't even get through them. Today I have a very different view of the world and I'm only interested in doing a film that's uplifting in some way."

Which begs the question of what on earth Hill makes of the films of Quentin Tarantino, his new best friend. "*Pulp Fiction* is the work of undoubtedly astonishing talents," he declares. "*Reservoir Dogs*? He shifts uncomfortably before answering. "I haven't seen it and I'm not going to. It's been described to me and I don't want that kind of violent input coming into my senses at this stage in my life."

He looks towards his wife of 25 years, who nods in agreement. "When you're young you can abuse your body, and believe me I did. But when you reach a certain point, it's doing damage to your psyche and I just don't want that." Difficult as it is to imagine, Hill's most public fan may one day come to share this perspective.

Don't call Jason Patric an actor any more, not since he produced — as well as starred in — *Your Friends & Neighbors*. Carol Allen reports

Since his 1987 debut in the rather silly vampire movie *The Lost Boys*, 32-year-old Jason Patric has carved out a decent, middle-ranking career for himself as a leading actor in films of variable quality and success. They include a highly praised performance in *Rush*, in which he played a drug-addicted cop, and his favourite role as a punch drunk boxer in

After Dark My Sweet. On the downside, he was also in Barry Levinson's *Sleepers*, with Brad Pitt, Robert De Niro and Dustin Hoffman, playing one of a group of friends wreaking revenge on the reform school

warden who had abused them as children, and co-starred with Sandra Bullock in his first and probably last action movie, the dreadful *Speed 2*. "I can't forget it," he says, "because it was such a terrible

experience for me as an actor, just miserable. I'd felt I was in a career rut and wanted to try a different genre, but making it just confirmed the instinct I'd always had to resist that type of role. I don't want to be a component in a \$100 million machine."

The experience inspired him to take a leaf out of Bullock's book and form his own production company. Now the fruits of that decision can be seen in *Your Friends & Neighbors*, writer/director Neil LaBute's follow-up movie to his acclaimed debut *In the Company of Men* and *Patric's* first producer credit. The film (see review opposite) is a stylish ensemble piece which takes a sourly realistic and witty look at sex and the city through the experiences of six thirtysomething urban professionals. Although it shares its distinctly lauded view of humanity with LaBute's earlier film, the resemblance, argues Patric, stops there.

"In Neil's first movie the main character's deliberately being malicious. This is about people reacting to their own needs and wants. Nobody's deliberately trying to hurt anyone and frankly they hurt themselves more than anyone else. He's showing us the subject of people's lives, which we don't normally see. The handling of relationships in movies is usually pathetic, nothing to do with how real people live."

Despite his protestations to the contrary, Patric plays a character who will make women in particular gasp at his behaviour. If a woman dumps him, he blames her for the failure of the relationship and feels justified in taking cruel revenge. When his friend's wife rejects his advances, he verbally demolishes her; behaviour which he sees as the expression of a "healthy self image". But Patric can find some good in him. "He's more complex than just a bastard or a misogynist," he says. "There's a perverse rationale to his logic. He has an inflexible set of rules for what he considers common decency. When someone crosses that line he feels he has a right to take action. It would be a lot easier for people



"I wanted to create a situation for actors that I'd never had," says Jason Patric of his new line of work

to take if I were wearing a swastika, like Ralph Fiennes in *Schindler's List*. When you are wearing Calvin Klein and sitting down in a restaurant, it's more chilling."

Patric did not, however, decide to produce LaBute's film merely in order to give himself a really meaty acting role. There were lots of projects I could have made as vehicles for me, but I'm off that kind of stuff," he says. "I wanted to find something unique that



would only get made if I pushed it. Then my company's head of development saw *In the Company of Men* at the Sundance Festival and thought it was one of the most interesting things there. I had a print flown out to Los Angeles, really liked it, asked Neil if he had any other scripts and he showed me *Your Friends & Neighbors*, which I found even more audacious than the first one. "This all happened months

before *Company* came out and got all those great reviews, so it was nice to feel I was at the cutting edge of something as opposed to jumping on a bandwagon."

As producer, Patric was very hands-on, involving himself in the choice of locations, cast and crew, the shooting and editing processes, even the design of the publicity posters. He was also able to make a film which looks a lot more expensive than the modest \$4.3 million it actually cost by use of careful budgeting, shooting entirely on location and calling in favours from technical colleagues he had worked with in the past. One thing he refused to stint on, though, was time for the actors, both in terms of a generous rehearsal period and allowance for retakes if required.

"I wanted to create a situation for actors that I'd never had," he says. "With most movies there's no rehearsal. People learn lines the morning they shoot a scene. I don't think it works that way. The idea of spontaneity's a bunch of crap. It's the preparation that gives you freedom. This movie is as much about the silences and what happens in them as it is

about the dialogue, and for the kind of acting that we needed, an intensive rehearsal period was essential."

Actors taking control of their professional lives by going into production is not a new phenomenon. Major stars, many of them women wanting perhaps to redress the male-biased power and money imbalance, have been doing it for years.

But actors as producers are also making an impact outside the major studio system on the lower-budget and creatively more exciting independent scene. Stanley Tucci has turned producer for *The Imposters*, his second film as writer/director, and *ER* star Anthony Edwards joined forces with fellow debut film producer Bill Kenwright for *Don't Go Breaking My Heart* (also reviewed opposite).

Patric has his own theory as to why the inmates are taking over the asylum. "Actors and others are finding that creatively Hollywood is now incredibly boring. But there's a lot of money to be made so nobody talks about it."

"Movies are a business and that's fine, but I felt I had a lot more to give than just showing up with my lines. I want to create the kind of movies that I care about and can be proud of."

Wham.

It is the thin red line the best war movie ever

7 ACADEMY AWARD NOMINATIONS
INCLUDING
BEST PICTURE BEST DIRECTOR BEST ACTOR

"A GENUINELY REMARKABLE FILM AS POWERFUL, MOVING AND CAPABLE OF INDELIBLY ETCHING ITSELF ON THE BRAIN AS SCHINDLER'S LIST."
EMPIRE

"BENIGNI IS BRILLIANT. THE FILM IS FANTASTIC."
THE TIMES

"MAGNIFICENT"
SIGHT & SOUND

"WONDERFUL"
THE GUARDIAN

A FABLE BY ROBERTO BENIGNI

LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL (LA VITA È BELLA)

STARTS TOMORROW

AND AT SELECTED CINEMAS NATIONWIDE FROM FEBRUARY 12th

from the director of 'in the company of men'

a film by neil labute

your friends & neighbors

a modern immorality tale

STARTS TOMORROW

AND AT SELECTED CINEMAS ACROSS THE COUNTRY

At heart, it's no laughing matter

NEW MOVIES: Roberto Benigni's concentration camp comedy *Life is Beautiful* is clever, witty — and nauseating, says James Christopher

Some things are impossible to get away with in the cinema: snuff movies and the glory years of Patrick Thistle FC spring to mind. But a comedy about the Holocaust? With \$90 million of foreign box office in its pocket and a sackful of gongs — including the Best Jewish Experience Award at the Jerusalem International Film Festival and a host of Oscar nominations (see panel, below right) — Roberto Benigni's *Life is Beautiful* (*La Vita è Bella*) appears to have done just that.

At the centre of Benigni's fable — written, directed by and starring himself — is a clown, Guido, who has a way with cars that makes Chaplin or Keaton look like driving instructors. For the first 50 minutes after arriving in the Tuscan town of Arezzo, circa 1939, Guido's life is one long, wonderful series of slapstick accidents that work romantic miracles in his favour. With his goofy face, rubbery Italian wit and even more rubbery physical skills, Benigni is a charming one-man blizzard of gags involving eggs, hats and flower pots. He charms a local school teacher (Nicoletta Braschi), the fiancée of the Fascist town clerk, and then sweeps her off on horseback during her posh engagement dinner. So far, so frothy.

We fast forward to the last year of the war, and the film suddenly lurches from a comedy about love into a comedy about survival. Guido and the teacher are married. They have a five-year-old son, Joshua, and the Nazis are carting Jews off to concentration camps. Guido and Joshua are duly arrested, and Braschi, although not Jewish, duly follows.

Masking his fears, Benigni's Guido pretends that the death camp is a light-hearted game. If Joshua stays out of sight of Nazi soldiers, they will amass enough points to win their very own tank. Magic surrealism is replaced by a surreal lie. And Guido's efforts to maintain that lie become as tortuously ridiculous as Joshua's luck in not being discovered. Guido jollies his son through the film and degradation. He gets a job in the officer's mess and plays romantic music to his wife across the compound. Everywhere, the grim reality is thwarted by Guido's dazzling *chit-chat*.

Benigni's eloquently put point is that imagination can conquer any horror. It is genuinely conceivable that people survived concentration camps by denying what was happening to them, or that they made up alternative, even more ludicrous, realities to stop themselves going insane. But to regard laughter as a cure-all seems as appropriate here as juggling decapitated heads at the scene of a motorway pile-up. The real problem with Benigni's inclusion of the Holocaust is that it never convinces for a second that it is anything more than a dramatic device — a tool to unlock a sentimental melodrama of family values. The film is undeniably moving, and beautifully shot. But it is also undeniably, and nauseatingly, manipulative.

Neil LaBute's comedy of manners, *Your Friends & Neighbors*, is no less manipulative than Benigni's fable. But the ugly truths on sale here are cleverly distilled from the sexual

Life is Beautiful

UCI Whiteleys
PG, 116 mins
Romantic fable stitches a disturbing comedy into the Holocaust

Your Friends & Neighbors

Virgin Haymarket
18, 100 mins
Withering, sex-obsessed comedy of manners

Switchblade Sisters

ABC Piccadilly
18, 90 mins
Re-release of cult film about teenage delinquents

Don't Go Breaking My Heart

ABC Shaftesbury Ave
PG, 93 mins
Quirky Valentine comedy

Jack Frost

Warner Village West
End, PG, 102 mins
Michael Keaton comes to life as a snowman

My Giant

Local venues only
PG, 104 mins
Sleazy agent Billy Crystal discovers a Romanian giant

Hôtel Du Nord

ABC Swiss Centre
PG, 110 mins
Marcel Carné's bitter-sweet 1938 classic

al anxieties of six yuppie thirtysomethings, and then injected back into their lives like some kind of truth drug.

Two ghastly, well-heeled couples chip away at each other during a dinner party, and then give their partners hell in bed. Aaron Eckhart's fat Barry can't pleasure his wife, Mary (Amy Brenneman) so he pleases himself. Ben Stiller's drama teacher, Jerry — an unlikely blend of Woody Allen and Tom Cruise — is too neurotic to carry off an affair. The fabulously bored Terri (Catherine Keener) meets a gallery assistant (Nastassja Kinski) and promptly falls into bed with her. And Jason Patric's loose cannon, Cary, is the Norman Bates of misogyny.

It's a merry-go-round of nasty clashes in bookshops, restaurants, steam-rooms and bedrooms. They obsess about their limp sex-lives and needle each other for their most lurid sexual experiences. They behave very badly indeed, but they are as oddly sympathetic as they are despicably selfish.



Oddly sympathetic as well as despicably selfish: the bed-hopping thirtysomethings of *Friends & Neighbors*



Guido the clown (Roberto Benigni) in *Life is Beautiful*: "To regard laughter as a cure-all for horror seems as appropriate here as juggling decapitated heads at the scene of a motorway pile-up"

They are, after all, our friends and neighbours.

Like his uncompromising first feature, *In the Company of Men*, LaBute's film is intensely theatrical. The icing is the toothy close-ups, the unscrupulous cutting of secrets, and the thinly disguised fact that they need each other's insecurities as much as they hate each other for them. Cynical? Sure. But it knocks the stuffing out of Ally McBeal.

For similar reasons you can see why Quentin Tarantino is in awe of Jack Hill and his 1975 flick, *Switchblade Sisters*. Pulpier than *Pulp Fiction*, swaggeringly trashy and shamelessly clichéd, the film cultivates an almost Victorian fear of acne-clad juvenile delinquents. Here a gang of suspiciously old-looking teenage girls — all studs, eyepatches and sullen stares — terrorises the hopeless police and God-fearing owners of greasy burger joints. There are ludicrous machine-gun shootouts and a power struggle about who is mean enough to be No. 1. It's one of those films that is so

bad it's embarrassing, and so embarrassing that it's hilarious. The joy is never knowing how far Hill has his tongue in his cheek. You couldn't hope to get away with this hysterical bad taste in 1999. And for that, I guess, we should be grateful.

The Valentine groove is Will Patterson's *Don't Go Breaking My Heart*. It's not great, but it's lovely. Shot around the nooks and crannies of Hampstead, the film plots a quirky romance between Jenny Seagrove's beautifully preserved single mum and ER heart-throb Anthony Edwards. The fly in the ointment is Charles Dance's lecherous dentist. Using hypnosis rather than painkillers, the smooth-talking tooth-puller plants all sorts of suggestions in Seagrove's head to get her into bed, which backfires.

Seagrove not only makes a fantastic but endearing fool of herself, but holds the film together too. Glacially beautiful, comically confused, she blunders from one date to the next not knowing what might pop out of her mouth. That it all ends in cheery tears makes one peculiarly grateful.

Despite the presence of Michael Keaton, Jack Frost has the commercial lifespan of a snowball in the desert. Keaton dies in a car accident on

Christmas Eve and comes back to life as a snowman to spend some quality time with his son. "Why me? Why like this?" wails the lumpy-faced snowman, drifting about his family's front yard as if there's a hovercraft in his underwear. Glenn Hoddle would put it down to bad karma. Others would be less charitable.

From one huge flake to another. In Michael Lehmann's *My Giant*, a seedy talent scout (Billy Crystal) crashes his car in Romania and is saved by the 7ft 6in Max (Gheorghe Muresan). Big-hearted Max hauls from a monastery stuck in the Middle Ages. The diminutive sleazeball hails from an armpit in Los Angeles. There's no real contest. The payoff is that Crystal will reunite Max with a long-lost childhood sweetheart in exchange for a string of ultra-bad movie parts. Humiliation doesn't come much uglier than this.

Fifty years have not dimmed Marcel Carné's 1938 classic, *Hôtel du Nord*. Rarely has the desire for death seemed so everyday and yet so poetically eloquent. A pair of dapper young lovers check into a hotel intent on committing suicide. Waking up in hospital, Anna-bella discovers her lover has done a runner. It's the cynical, hard-bitten rogues next door who steal the film, though. Louis Jouvet, a pricelessly unaffected actor, and Arletty, a tart with rusty heart, are wittily seduced by the purity of the death wish. Valentines may find the pessimism of Jacques Prévert's script too existential for comfort. I find it turns an honest key. The prewar fatalism is at wonderful odds with the smoky atmosphere of Alexandre Trauner's brilliant studio sets: the shabby hotel, the inky canal. Paris has rarely seemed so dowdy.

part h is awkwardly put together by surfer/director George Greenough, but the final 25 minutes turn up trumps with what we used to call a "mind-blowing" visual sequence, synchronised to Pink Floyd's *Echoes*. Equipped with a specially developed boat and camera lens, Greenough sails right through the innards of rolling waves — a hypnotic spectacle, but not one for the seasick.

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THE MAIN OSCAR NOMINATIONS

BEST PICTURE: *Elizabeth*, *Life is Beautiful*, *Saving Private Ryan*, *Shakespeare in Love*, *The Thin Red Line*.
ACTRESS: Roberto Benigni, *Life is Beautiful*; Steven Spielberg, *Saving Private Ryan*; John Madden, *Shakespeare in Love*; Terence Malick, *The Thin Red Line*; Peter Weir, *The Truman Show*.
SUPPORTING ACTRESS: James Coburn, *Affliction*; Robert Duvall, *A Civil Action*; Ed Harris, *The Truman Show*; Geoffrey Rush, *Shakespeare in Love*; Billy

Bob Thornton, *A Simple Plan*.
SUPPORTING ACTRESS: Kathy Bates, *Primary Colors*; Brenda Blethyn, *Little Voice*; Judi Dench, *Shakespeare in Love*; Rachel Griffiths, *Hilary and Jackie*; Lynn Redgrave, *Gods and Monsters*; Nick Nolte, *Affliction*; Edward Norton, *American History X*.
ACTRESS: Cate Blanchett, *Elizabeth*; Fernanda Montenegro, *Central Station*; Gwyneth Paltrow, *Shakespeare in Love*; Meryl Streep, *One True Thing*; Emily Watson, *Hilary and Jackie*.
SUPPORTING ACTOR: James Coburn, *Affliction*; Robert Duvall, *A Civil Action*; Ed Harris, *The Truman Show*; Geoffrey Rush, *Shakespeare in Love*; Billy

Vincent Cerami and Roberto Benigni, *Life is Beautiful*; Robert Rodat, *Saving Private Ryan*; Marc Norman and Tom Stoppard, *Shakespeare in Love*; Andrew Niccol, *The Truman Show*.
CINEMATOGRAPHY: A Civil Action, Elizabeth, Saving Private Ryan, Shakespeare in Love, The Thin Red Line.
ORIGINAL SONG: *I Don't Want to Miss a Thing* from *Armageddon* (Diane Warren); *The Prayer for Celine Dion* (Carole Bayer Sager); *David Foster*, *Tony Renis*, *Albino Testa*; *A Soft Place to Fall* from *The Horse Whisperer* (Allison Moorer and Gail Owens); *That'll Do from Babe: Pig in the City* (Randy Newman); *When You Believe* from *The Prince of Egypt* (Stephen Schwartz).

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ARMAGEDDON

Buena Vista, 12, 1998
IF THE world had to be saved from destruction by a hurtling asteroid, would you send up Bruce Willis and a surly team of former convicts, testosterone specials and jokers? This thundering blockbuster does, and turns the prospect of the world's imminent annihilation into a great excuse for a

souped-up video game. You can rent the film now on video, or buy it on DVD; the latter format gives you marvellous sound and a dazzlingly crisp image, especially so when clouds, fire and debris swirl around, although you do have to flip over the disc half way through to see if Bruce and his merry crew actually do save mankind as we know it.

NEW VIDEO RELEASES

THE AVENGERS

Warner, 12, 1998
AFTER all the kerfuffle kicked up by its sneaky cinema debut behind critics' backs, now is the time to re-evaluate this updated re-vamp of the cult TV series. Unfortunately, nothing much has changed. The two leads, Ralph Fiennes and Uma Thurman, are still charmless, the script still feeble, and Sean Connery still wastes our time and his as the arch villain, trying to bring the world to its knees by mucking about with the weather. Renting the film for home viewing, though, is a painless and cheap way to find out what the fuss was about.

CRYSTAL VOYAGER

Blue Dolphin, E, 1974
YOU could categorise this period piece as a poetic documentary about surfing. For the most

part h is awkwardly put together by surfer/director George Greenough, but the final 25 minutes turn up trumps with what we used to call a "mind-blowing" visual sequence, synchronised to Pink Floyd's *Echoes*. Equipped with a specially developed boat and camera lens, Greenough sails right through the innards of rolling waves — a hypnotic spectacle, but not one for the seasick.

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OST 1998

■ OPERA

Making of a Parsifal

Kim's game of chances

He's an actor, you know, a colleague whispered to me when I first spotted the tenor Kim Begley 15 or so years ago as a student at the National Opera Studio. And indeed he was. Long before his Achilles in *King Priam* and Cassio in *Otello* at Covent Garden, before his Janáček at Glyndebourne, before Lohengrin, Siegmund and, now, the title role in the new *Parsifal* which opens at English National Opera on Saturday.

Kim Begley had trodden the boards as everyone's favourite White Rabbit, as Flute the bellows-mender at Stratford, and much more besides.

"It was all I ever wanted to be: at 18 I muscled my way into the wardrobe department of Chester's Gateway Theatre, got myself a place on the costume course at the Wimbledon School of Art, understudied and acted all over London, then spent two years with the Royal Shakespeare Company in the late 1970s. That was in the days of Trevor Nunn when everything he touched turned to gold."

Including Begley. His next break was being spotted by Rudolf Pfenning from the Guildhall School of Music and Drama while playing the villain in a *Robinson Crusoe* panto. He clearly heard the tenor potential within Begley's basso profundo, and told him about Arts Council bursaries for actors who wanted to be singers. Begley took a crash course in theory, piano and voice at the Guildhall and, within a year, Covent Garden had offered him a principal's contract on condition he study for a year at the National Opera Studio.

"I realised then that opera was the most perfect, the most complete form of theatre there was. And I was totally in awe of my colleagues. They were all younger than I was; but I couldn't read music and had no languages. I had to learn incredibly quickly. A lot of bluffing went on, I can tell you."

Six seasons and 30 roles later, Begley left the Royal Opera and began to work with Nikolaus Lehnhoff on Glyndebourne's great Janáček cycle. He had found his professional soul-mate. "Lehnhoff was the

■ OPERA:

Hilary Finch charts the tenor Kim Begley's rise from panto to *Parsifal*

person who opened the international door for me." And through it lay Wagner. "He offered me Lohengrin in Frankfurt, and I went for it, because I could trust him." After that came *Lohengrin* in Cologne and Milan, Siegmund at Covent Garden — and now *Parsifal*, again directed by Lehnhoff.

What's so special about working with Lehnhoff? "He comes to the first rehearsal with everything worked out in meticulous detail, like a film script. His method doesn't suit everyone. But it gives you such a secure foundation that you

"I couldn't read music and had no languages. I had to learn incredibly quickly"

then have the freedom to develop your own performance. He works in a very visual way, focusing on your body language, on your relationship to everyone else on stage. And that, after all, is what hits an audience first."

So what of Begley's own performance? *Parsifal* is, after all, the Holy Grail of tenor roles. What is required of him is nothing less than the portrayal of an archetype of human spiritual experience: the long journey of the "innocent fool", the unknown boy from the forest whose mission is to heal the wound of the dying king. Amfortas and, through acquiring the knowl-

edge of guilt, responsibility and compassion, to restore the healing power of the Grail. The orphaned simpleton becomes the redeemer redeemed. How does Begley prepare himself?

"I don't prepare! It must be the actor in me. I just approach it with a blank sheet of paper. It all comes in rehearsal. Of course, the difference with opera is that the music doesn't give you that total freedom. I spend all my time simply learning how to sing the score. You hear two things about the role of *Parsifal*: that it's very low, and that it's very short. Well, it may be short — just 25 minutes in an evening of nearly six hours — but it's intensely concentrated. And Wagner wrote it very precisely for a tenor, and knew exactly what he was doing. The choice and placing of every word in every phrase counts."

How, then, does Begley feel about singing it in English? "Mark Elder, who is conducting, is of course a passionate advocate of it. But I had to be honest and say, from day one, that I feel it's too big a compromise. Richard Stokes's translation is a tremendous achievement, there's no doubt about that. But it's simply not possible to reproduce all the vowels, stresses and inflection so meticulously chosen by Wagner. And, in my personal view, with surtitles and with much better educated audiences, it's not necessary today, either."

So Begley returns to the score, close-focuses on *Parsifal* and his blissful ignorance. "Instant communication is essential. It's a long evening and people need to feel that raw energy: to see me wringing my hands, not analyse why I'm wringing them. The more you internalise, the less you communicate. And if you don't learn how to cope with the emotional force of the music in rehearsal, you're done for in performance. When I first listened to it, I just broke down every time. The sheer intensity of the music is disturbing enough. But then, to think you are going to sing it! That's a privilege which can simply never be over-estimated."

• *Parsifal* opens at 7pm on Saturday at the Coliseum (0171-632 8300)

ARTS

■ CLASSICAL CDS

The Geisha revived

East on tour

The conductor, Nicolae Dohotaru, knows how Puccini should go, and his modest-sized orchestra was more than willing: the tiny chorus produced a rousing sound.

And there was good singing in intriguingly Russian-inflected Italian. A Cavaradossi, Aleksey Repchinsky, who can bluff out a *Vittoria!* to pin you to your seat and then caress *O dolci mani* so sweetly is not to be sniffed at. Ludmila Magomedova (Tosca) has a secure dramatic soprano and an entrancing prima-donna stage manner. The Scarpia, Boris Maternico, was impressively well-mannered, but his *legato* was properly Italianate.

There is also something very right about an opera performance sandwiched between Cannon and Ball and *Goodness Gracious Me* in a genuine community audience. The fact that Maternico's masterpiece has been denied a lottery grant still makes me seethe, and with hindsight this is where the Royal Opera should have spent its exile. Then the audience would have heard even better opera.

RODNEY MILNES



Fool's progress: Kim Begley sings *Parsifal* in Nikolaus Lehnhoff's new production for ENO

Mournful magic

GILLIAN WELCH ought to come sepia-toned. Defiantly anti-urban, her two extraordinarily timeless albums reinforce the Depression-era image. She may come from Los Angeles but she couldn't sound more antiquesy rustic if she had tumbled out of the Appalachians yesterday.

For nearly two hours, punctuated by a 40-minute interval, she played a compelling mix of keening laments and sombre murder ballads accompanied only by two deceptively simple acoustic guitars. The lack of any real change of pace could have sounded repetitious but somehow it never did and the reverential crowd gave the evening the air of an oldtime prayer meeting.

There was a remarkable modal quality to Welch's mournful voice, like a lived-in Joan Baez, while David Rawlings, who gave an exemplary display of finger-picking guitar styles, added a ghostly quality with his almost whispered counterpoint. Their own compositions were dark and pow-

POP

erful explorations of old-fashioned themes such as sin and redemption, with titles like *I'm Not Afraid to Die* and *The Devil Had a Hold of Me*.

On *My Morphine*, a tale of utter wretchedness, Welch let out a yodel that was quite possibly the most lonesome sound ever heard inside a concert venue. Like a howl, it seemed to come from a place beyond words. For her first encore she sang the semi-autobiographical *Orphan Girl*, which was also covered by Emmylou Harris. Called back twice more, she unfurled understated versions of *Jesus On The Mainline* and *Long Black Veil* during which you could have heard a pin drop.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON

NEW CLASSICAL CDS: A Butterfly eight years early; and songs by a fine young German baritone

MUSICAL

■ JONES
The Geisha.
Watson/Walker/Maltman/
Koc/Suart/New London.
Light Orch/Coip
Hyperion CDA67006 ***
£14.99

SIDNEY Jones got in first, beating Puccini by eight years. Naval encounters with Japanese ladies are the subject of both *Madama Butterfly* and *The Geisha*. There the similarities end. Jones's officers from the *HMS Turtle* are British to the core, excellently sung by Christopher Maltman and Jazie Koc, and after their dalliances they both do the right thing and return to their first loves.

Hyperion has done excellent service in resurrecting a musical which had a two-year run in London a century ago and is now virtually forgotten. Jones wrote brief, catchy numbers, scarcely ever exceeding the three-minute mark. The son of a bandmaster, he drew his inspiration as much from the ditties of the music hall as from G & S, who were still ruling the musical roost, not least with *The Mikado*.

Lilian Watson gives Mimosa, the geisha, all the fragrance the name demands. She is well matched by Sarah Walker, the girl who pulls her fiancé back on to the straight and narrow. To her go two comic songs, one about a monkey on a stick (which Jones did not write) and the other about a parrot, clearly a close relative of tit-willow. Richard Suart has the best of several gloriously non-PC numbers, including *Chin Chin Chinaman*. Jolly place, Jones's Japan.

JOHN HIGGINS

VOCAL

■ BEETHOVEN
Songs
Genz/Vignoles
Hyperion CDA 67055 ***
£14.99

AS WE have to wait until June for the young German baritone Stephan Genz to sing live in London, it's good to see this new release of Beethoven songs which arrives in time to join the celebrations of Goethe's 250th birthday this year.

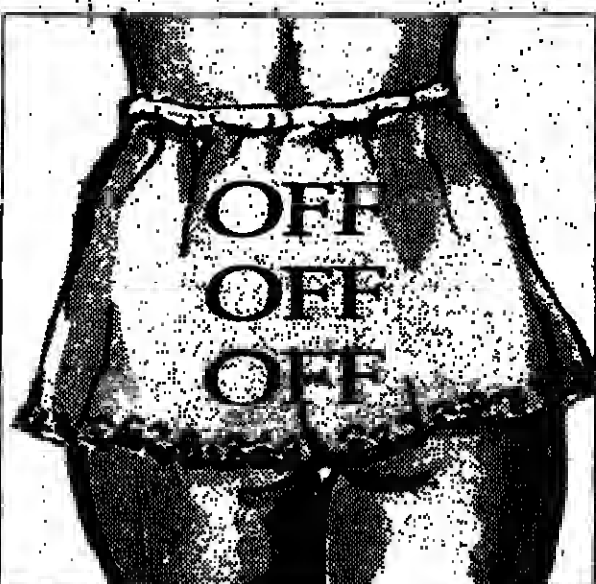
The 26-year-old Genz is in the first bloom of his youthful prime; and Beethoven's setting of Goethe's *Mallied*, with its lightly breathless, springing words, could have been written with Genz himself in mind. Roger Vignoles is Genz's regular accompanist, and the two of them find an irresistible bounding energy for one of Beethoven's most spontaneous songs, *Neue Liebe, neues Leben*; and they have a good nibble at the wit of the flea-song *Aus Goethes Faust*.

This generous recital, which also includes six Gellert settings that look ahead to Brahms's *Four Serious Songs*, concludes with Genz's beautifully paced performance of Beethoven's pioneering song-cycle *An die ferne Geliebte*, one song modulating exquisitely into another in Vignoles's piano playing.

HILARY FINCH

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THE TIMES



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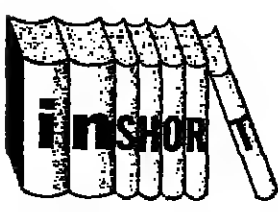


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CHANGING TIMES

BOOKS



The bard of the big screen

THE TESTAMENT
By John Grisham
Century, £16.99
ISBN 0 7126 7826 3

ONE day some postgraduate with time, money and little sense of how to utilise either, will write a thesis entitled *Allusions to King Lear in the work of John Grisham*. In Grisham's latest thriller, *The Testament*, a self-made billionaire called Troy Phelan is wheelchair-bound. Increasingly reclusive, he is living to die, while his children are metaphorically tugging at his beard and waiting to get their paws on his assets. Sounds familiar? Of course the likeness between Grisham and Shakespeare does not stop there. Both are the current darlings of Hollywood and this infuriatingly addictive tale has blockbuster scrawled all over it.

A last word

PURE DRIVE
By Steve Martin
Penguin, £9.99
ISBN 0 670 88521 5

MANY of these "after-dinner mints to the big meal of literature" are reminiscences and fragments of scripts published by Tina Brown in *The New Yorker*. Martin, better known for his goofy roles in *Roxanne* and *Father of the Bride* than for his television writing and stage-plays, gently teases with musings such as *Lolita at Ffry* and *The Poparazzi of Plato*. The rogue interviewer Dennis Pennis once asked Martin: "Hi Steve, why aren't you funny any more?" Almost two years after the awkward silence that followed that very public poking, this may be Martin's winning retort.

Small detail

TAKING DOREEN OUT OF THE SKY
By Alan Beard
Picador, £9.99
ISBN 0 330 37192 4

ALAN BEARD has produced a collection of stories set in the West Midlands that touches and tickles. But it is not always the main characters that enchant in his stories of ordinary and extraordinary lives. In the title tale about the closing of a steelworks in Birmingham, it is the faces we see as we look over the narrator's shoulder that are most affecting: "Through the leafless branches of a street tree I noticed this man drag something out of a house. It turned out to be a woman. She was kicking, he pulled." Beard revels in the details of working-class life and manages to slip in important contemporary reference points — the "socials", the Bull Ring Centre and Fat Willy anoraks — without being preachy, heavy-handed or self-consciously populist.

ALEX O'CONNELL

A vast monument to plain good sense

Novelist, essayist and satirist:

Gore Vidal's versatility is a reader's delight, but an editor's nightmare



Erica Wagner

Harold Acton found him "aggressively handsome", as Gore Vidal characteristically notes in his memoir, *Palimpsest*, published in 1995. Acton was right, and Vidal is so even now, gliding into his eightieth decade and peering coolly out at us from the burnished cover of this book. We only get the gaze of one eye — the other's iris is truncated by text — but it is no less penetrating for being Cyclopean. If it were not ungenuinely to do so, and Vidal has always been a gentleman, he seems to be issuing a dare: "Argue with me if you can." He seems to know he'll come out on top.

Who is like Gore Vidal? Swift, perhaps; or Mark Twain, or Henry James. He is novelist, satirist, essayist, playwright, even — like Dickens — an actor. He was born at West Point: his grandfather was a senator from Tennessee, T. P. Gore, blind from the age of two and to whom his grandson would read by the hour. Amelia Earhart was his father's lover; Eleanor Roosevelt a family friend. He made his own ventures into politics. He seems to have known everyone; if we can't (quite) always believe what he says about them, well, that's just

part of his mischievous charm. He is serious but never sentimental, and — rare quality — unafraid to say what he thinks. There is no one quite like him, and if you do not know his work you should. So this fat anthology of Vidal's work — nearly 1,000 pages — poses the reviewer a problem.

Fred Kaplan is its doughty editor. Kaplan has written biographies of Dickens, James and Carlyle; he is now at work on still-very-much-with-us Vidal, with his subject's full co-operation. Kaplan, in trying to present "the essential" Vidal, has set himself a tough task. Vidal is nothing if not prolific: how to squeeze a dollop each of 23 novels, a collection of short stories, five plays and 12 works of non-fiction into a single book? The historical novels — *Burr*, *Lincoln*, *Hollywood* among them — are very different in tone from what he has called his "inventions", which include *Myra*

Breckenridge and his latest novel, *The Smithsonian Institution*. The histories render the Vidalian vision of America's past: the inventions offer surreal satire on the present. There are the religious novels — one of which, *Live from Golgotha*, made Saints Paul and Timothy rather more than just good friends, televised the Crucifixion, and caused predictable outrage.

It is a sentiment that cannot be strange to Vidal. His novel *The City and the Pillar*, appearing in 1948 shortly before the Kinsey Report, was one of the first published in the mainstream to deal openly with male homosexuality — damned by many critics, it nevertheless became a bestseller. For some years afterwards, *The New York Times*, among others, refused to review his work. Yet he always prevailed — continued to live as a writer, which is all that counts. On top of all this he is a truly great essayist: authori-

ative, intimate but never casual, taste, rocking the boat with every ear at his disposal. So how to encompass all this?

It can seem unfair to question an editor's choice of an author's work. Everything is not relative; but literature is still a matter of taste, and Kaplan cannot be blamed for deciding, say, that *Duluth* — an invention of 1983 that takes on fast-and-

loose TV culture and narrative theory, among other things — is more worthy of inclusion here than 1954's *Messiah*, which in its creation of a cult of death is a chilling indictment of organised religion. But space has forced Kaplan not only to choose but also to carve: with the exception of *Myra Breckenridge*, reproduced here in its full, uproarious splendour, we are given chunks of novels, and this is frustrating. It is, perhaps, a good thing for the Gore scholar to be able to read the old and new endings to *The City and the Pillar* — Vidal revised the book twice — side by side; but if you haven't read the book in the first place, why on earth would you want to read only the end?

This is not a problem where the essays are concerned, and Kaplan provides a good selection. What's marvellous about Vidal is the pleasant shiver of horrified anticipation that fills you upon seeing the title *Women's Liberation: Feminism and Its Discontents* — and then the discovery, or rediscovery, of his plain good sense. He is not a cynic; he writes movingly of the difficult Eleanor Roosevelt, of the world that seemed lost when she died in 1962 and he watched her cof-

fin roll by: "From 1950 on, our story has been progressively more and more squalid. Nor can one say it is a lack of the good and great in high places: they are always there when needed. Rather the corruption of empire has etiolated the words themselves. Now we live in a society which none of us may like, all would like to change, but no one knows how. Most ominous of all, there is now a sense that what has gone wrong for us may be irreversible... Whether or not one thought of Eleanor Roosevelt as a world-conqueror or as a chronic explainer or as a scourge of the selfish, she was like no one else in her usefulness. As the box containing her went past me, I thought, well, that's that. We're really on our own now."

So we are. We may be glad though, that Gore Vidal is with us still. But if you have never read his work, save your £25. Go to the library, or buy his novels and essays in paperback. Read him whole, and think for yourself as he would have you do.

THE ESSENTIAL GORE VIDAL
Edited by Fred Kaplan
Little, Brown, £25
ISBN 0 316 84806 9

Monster of the seabed

Just when you thought it was safe:
David Bellamy finds a 60 ft squid

Britain may once have ruled the waves but at the height of her power, when the great *Challenger* expedition first plumbed the depths of the world's oceans, evidence continued to accrue that a monster mollusc was the true master of the deep. One hundred years on — during which time sonar and other detection devices have allowed us to rape the womb of Mother Earth, sending the cetaceans, turtles and many fisheries to the brink of extinction — no one has ever seen *Architeuthis*, the monster of the deep, alive, and lived to tell the tale... or have they?

Mystery or imagination, what are the facts about the giant squid? Well there is no need to hold your breath any longer, except perhaps when walking on the beach, for all the information is in this fascinating book.

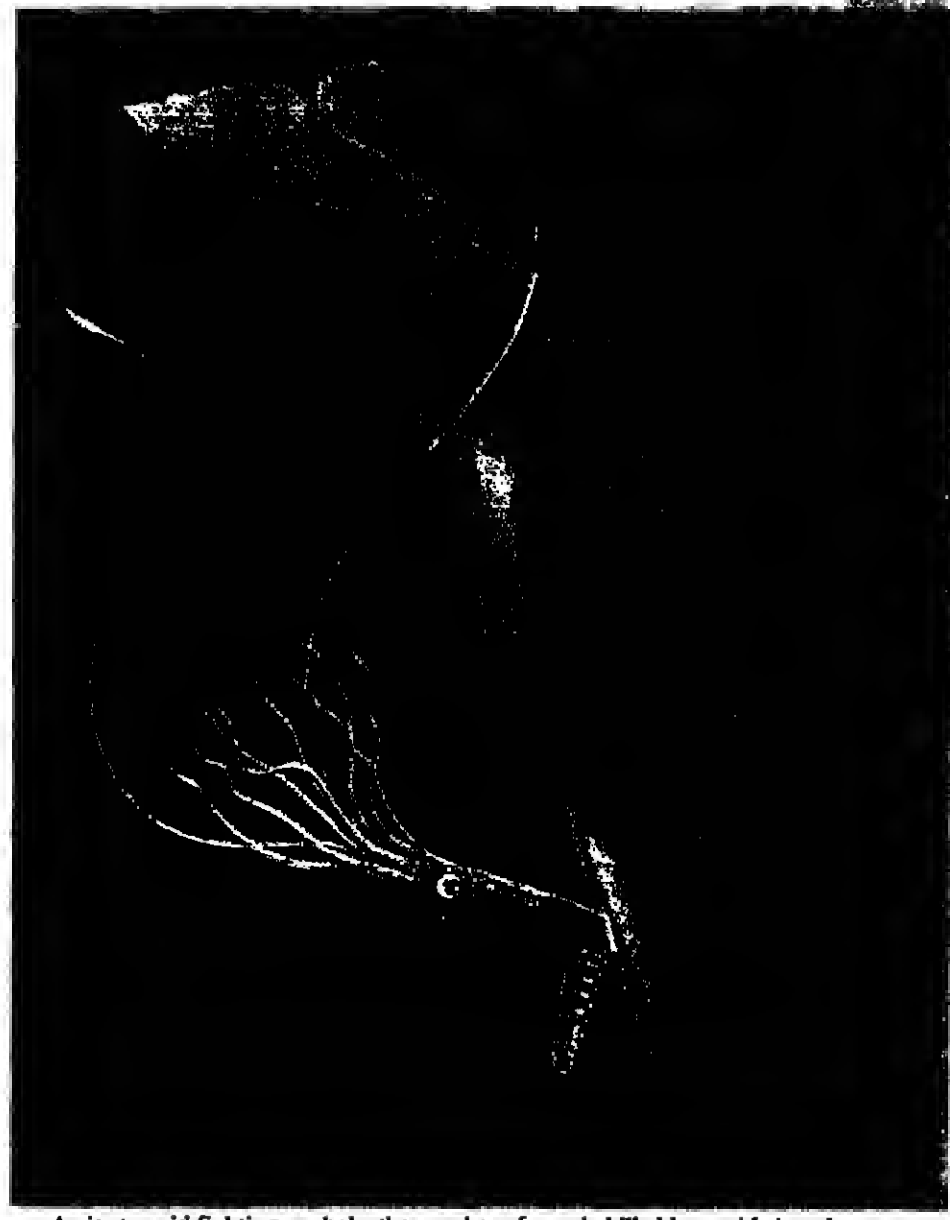
Giant squids up to 60 ft long (and possibly over four times that length) exist in all the oceans of the world. You may be lucky and find a carcass rotting on the beach — if so be sure to photograph it and inform the local university. How many people have been snatched to a fate worse than death? We shall never know. The good news is that such devouring seems unlikely, for the guts of all the giants found on the strand to date have

THE SEARCH FOR THE GIANT SQUID
By Jonathan Ellis
Robert Hale, £25
ISBN 0 7090 6433 0



been devoid of identifiable remains. What is more, as the stranded males are often ripe with sperm packs, the theory goes that they only venture into the shallows to find a mate and they do this sans wedding breakfast. Although both sexes can glow with an eerie phosphorescence, it could be that despite their dinner-plate eyes they cannot locate a partner in the inky depths. There is also some evidence that like lesser squids, the giants swim in shoals, an awesome thought.

Giant squids certainly fight sperm whales, but so would you if you were being eaten. However, the whales appear always to make rings out of the monster calamaries. The



A giant squid fighting a whale: the number of people killed by squids is unknown

question then remains: could the air-breathing cetacean ever be held down for the count by the master predator of the deep — who has no need to surface for a breath of air?

Dying whales have regurgitated chunks of *Architeuthis* (perhaps the only enlightening information that ever came from whaling, commercial or scientific) and an incredible 28,000 squid beaks were found in the stomach of one whale.

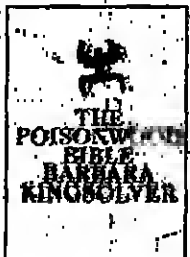
From this point on, science fact merges with fiction. It is estimated that before whaling took its toll there were about 10 million tonnes of sperm whales living in the oceans. To sustain this voracious army would take an annual catch of 100 million tonnes of squid — an amount greater than the weight of the whole human race. If, as research shows, only 0.26 per cent of these are *Architeuthis* it still means

there must at least be a million of these monsters swimming. Perhaps it's time to make a sequel to *Jaws* — the film which gave sharks such a bad name. *Beaks* could begin with the same young lady fresh from sex on the beach in the grips of an amorous squid, so living to tell the tale and film it for posterity. When it comes to giant squids fact may be stranger than fiction. Read all about it.

Live by the book, die by the gun

CLAIRE MESSUD

THE POISONWOOD BIBLE
By Barbara Kingsolver
Faber, £10.99
ISBN 0 571 19763 9



I spent nearly 30 years waiting for the wisdom and maturity to write this book," Barbara Kingsolver announces in a note to her new novel, *The Poisonwood Bible*.

Set largely in 1959-60 in the Belgian Congo, the novel bears evidence of the author's seriousness of intent: more than 500 pages long, with a bibliography, a wealth of Kikongo vocabulary, biblical resonances, a 30-year narrative span and five narrators, *The Poisonwood Bible* is a tome of significant ambition.

This said, Kingsolver is a bestselling novelist rather than an academician, and of daunting material she has wrought a rich, readable saga about the Price family, American evangelicals on a mission to spread Christ's word in Africa. Nathan Price, pastor and patriarch, is the only family member denied a voice in Kingsolver's book — which is just as well, as he is a fire and brimstone tyrant, contemptuous of his family and patronising to the heathens among whom they settle. Orleana, his long-suffering spouse, is given several cross-section monologues; but the bulk of the book belongs to their daughters: Rachel, Leah and Adah, and little Ruth May.

Rachel, almost 16 as the story begins, is an all-American blonde, preoccupied with lipsticks and popularity and prone to a cartoonish stream of malapropisms: Leah and Adah are twins; the former, initially her father's sole defender, is an earnest seeker for justice, and as such will ally herself with the Congolese in the face of Western imperialism; and the latter, crippled by an accident in the womb, is a voluntary mute, an embittered but brilliant leaver who lives in a realm of private palindromes. Their littlest sister,

Ruth May, at only five is the best able to adapt to their new society and yet is more readily harmed by it also.

The trials that confront the Prices worsen when the family stay on after Congo's independence in June, 1960. In the end, the family pay a terrible price for their missionary will — and yet, as Kingsolver makes clear, it is no greater a price than that paid by many Congolese families.

The Poisonwood Bible is an engrossing novel and an interesting one — not least because Kingsolver is adept at interweaving the Prices' individual traumas and the broader political intrigues of the time — but it is not an especially sophisticated literary undertaking. Kingsolver's characters are too easily divided into the good and the bad, and their political discussions tend to be didactic and indigestible. The lyrical passages are also often cloying and unconvincing.

But when the novel strives least for effect, it is both provocative and affecting, a globalised, post-colonial *Little Women*, which illustrates how profoundly both women, and the world, have changed.

GERALD JACOBS

FOLEY

The Spy Who Saved 10,000 Jews

By Michael Smith
Hodder & Stoughton, £20
ISBN 0 340 71850 1

THE GOOD GERMAN OF NANKING
The Diaries of John Rabe
Edited by Erwin Wickert
Little, Brown, £18.99
ISBN 0 316 84807 8

all submit like sheep. Few are Nazis at heart."

If John Rabe wasn't really "a Nazi at heart", he started out believing himself to be signing up for the party and, as the deprivations of his Chinese neighbours began to weigh upon him, constantly expressing his hope in Hitler in his diaries, edited here by Erwin Wickert and translated by John F. Woods.

Although his employers offered him the chance of escape, Rabe decided to stick to his post, not for professional motives but for humanitarian ones. A dapper, diabetic,

energetic Christian, he set up a committee of Western residents of Nanking with the task of enforcing a safety zone for Chinese civilians in the face of a brutal, vengeful assault by the Japanese. The diary records the growing tribulations he and his colleagues faced and the bitter treatment of the inhabitants of Nanking by marauding Japanese soldiers. The widespread violation of women and girls and the wanton murder of adults and children is, for him, "destruction barbaric beyond all comprehension".

The outrage expressed by Rabe and other Germans in China is of course heavy with irony, given the events about to unfold "at home". Eventually Rabe's eyes are opened to this, too, and there is a short section included of his German diary dealing with the last days of the war and its immediate aftermath when Rabe and his family are suffering their own hardships and indignities.

Having witnessed the bestiality of the Japanese, Germans, Russians and indeed the Chinese, in contrast the diary of war, the selfless John Rabe had a rare exposure to the more disturbing patterns of human behaviour. His story is a significant document.

A gamble that doesn't pay off

Someone, somewhere has decided that Jonathan Rendall is a hot property. His first novel, *This Bloody Mary Is The Last Thing I Own*, won the Somerset Maugham Prize. For his second, at the age of 35, he has been accorded some unusual publishing privileges.

His very own imprint, for a start, which turns out to be a wholly-owned subsidiary of Random House. Yellow Jersey Press also has a role to play in Rendall's novel, in which one of its editors offers him a £12,000 advance to gamble the lot and write a book about it. It's not an original idea — for all the cutesy jacket blurb, attempting to blur the lines between fact and fiction. "In August 1997 Jonathan Rendall was given £12,000 to gamble. It is not clear whether he gambled the whole amount, though he insists he did... Here then is his story, whether true or false."

While reading it, I noticed a profile by Rendall in one of the Sunday magazines. Jimmy White, who makes several cameo appearances in the novel. More blurring. Are we to assume Rendall is himself as deer-

TWELVE GRAND
The Gambler as Hero
By Jonathan Rendall
Yellow Jersey Press, £10
ISBN 0 224 05149 0



minedly dissolute, and self-destructively alcoholic as the journalist-novelist he plays in his own story?

To be frank, we don't much care. He stumbles through his own pages in a haze of booze, drugs and blotto-dom, doubly alienating when this reduces him to nothing more than a narrative in note form while idly wondering whether to nick the bottle and cheat Yellow Jersey out of its book. Not easy to read, stuff like that — or as he wild wrl. sff lk th.

TONY HOLDEN

Heroes at the heart of the enemy

In the six years since Steven Spielberg's transformation of Oskar Schindler, courtesy of Thomas Keneally, into a household name, there has been a steady trickle of similar tales of individual moral courage during the dark days of the 1930s and 1940s. Each one, when properly authenticated, offers a welcome corrective to the despair prompted by any sustained consideration of the actions of the perpetrators of this century's barbarism and the inaction of those who stood by or turned away.

Frank Foley and John Rabe are certainly the kinds of men whose efforts on behalf of the persecuted and oppressed need to be more widely known. Foley was a British spy, a member of MI6, based in Germany in the 1930s, whose eyes were quickly opened to the growing anti-Semitism around him in Berlin. During the same period, John Rabe, a German employee of Siemens electrical company long based in Nanking, then capital of China, bore witness to the atrocities committed by members of the invading Japanese Army.

Frank Foley's study is written by Michael Smith in a crisp, informative manner. He provides a concise account of the historical events building into war and very effectively

conveys the atmosphere of cumulative danger experienced by Jews in Germany under the Nazis. Smith mostly allows the dramatic facts to speak for themselves.

Foley's cover in Berlin for his spying activities was a post as passport control officer attached to the British Consulate. It was in this capacity that he strove to evade regulations to issue thousands of Jews with visas for Palestine as well as helping to provide false documentation and access to escape routes out of the Reich for further thousands who otherwise would undoubtedly have perished.

A steadfast soul with a passion for gardening, Foley led a life of improbable colour and danger. He became a key intelligence officer and Smith relates a number of intriguing episodes in which, for example, Foley organised a rescue operation with James Bond's creator, Ian Fleming, and later played a part in the interrogation of Rudolf Hess.

Foley often found himself up against the bungling coldness of the British authorities as well as the vicious coldness of the Germans. Tellingly, his wife wrote of her neighbours as among the latter: "They hate this business as much as we do, but none of them has the guts to stand against it but

THE TIMES BOOKSHOP

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BOOKS

Sounds like a spiritual awakening

Music theory was influential in ancient cosmology and theology — Roger Scruton discovers a time when the strum of a lyre really did make the world go round

The term "music" comes to us from ancient Greek and commemorates the goddesses (Muses) who presided over the arts. Singing, dancing and the playing of musical instruments were not just pastimes for the Greeks: they were integral parts of the public and religious life of the city. Music was the cornerstone of education; for the Pythagoreans it was also the key to the universe. Music was the principle theme of philosophy, with Plato arguing powerfully against the rock bands of his day.

The Athenian theatre was also a musical event, with a precisely annotated score. And no party was complete without the aulos, the lyre or the kithara. In the literature of ancient Greece we glimpse a society so permeated by music that almost every action — from a gymnastic contest to a trial by jury, from a symposium to a military skirmish — seems to be shaped by the laws of harmony. And the musical ideas of Greece have been handed down to us in words which have no Saxon equivalent: "rhythm", "harmony" and "melody", which says so much more than "tune".

But how much do we actually know about ancient music? Until recently not much. We knew the names of instruments and could reconstruct them in outline from the ceramic illustrations. We knew the names of the modes and even of the notes. We also knew some of the theory — both the theory of the tetrachord (from which the Greek scales were constructed), and the cosmology which was supposed to explain it. Indeed this cosmology — due to the Pythagoreans, but wonderfully embellished by Plato in the *Tymaion* — has been the most influential theory in the history of the world, since it gave us the cosmology, the theology and the vision of human nature which prevailed from antiquity to the Renaissance.

Still we did not really know much about ancient music — about its melodic or rhythmic organisation, about the timbre of its instruments, about

MUSIC IN ANCIENT GREECE AND ROME
By J. G. Landels
Routledge, £50
ISBN 0 415 16776 0



the role of the accompaniment, or about the tuning of the aulos, the lyre or the kithara. Classical scholars have recently been putting the pieces together. The most learned of them, M. L. West, in his *Ancient Greek Music*, has given an incomparable analysis of the Greek scales, and solved so many of the outstanding problems that we can fairly say that Greek music is no longer a mystery to us. Building on the work of West and others, John Landels has produced a lively and illuminating survey of what we know, including transcriptions of the few surviving scores, one of them (possibly) a fragment of Euripides. His book can be recommended to any musical person wishing to imagine for himself the sound, the atmosphere and the meaning of ancient song and dance.

Landels devotes considerable attention to that mysterious instrument, the aulos or double pipe, whose mythic origins are recorded in the fable of Marsyas. The aulos, like the

oboe, is a reed instrument, whose pitch is altered by stopping holes in the pipes, in the manner of a recorder. But why two pipes? Not in order to sound separate notes in two-part harmony. Such a practice was unknown in Greece: the word "harmonia" denoted the relation between consecutive rather than simultaneous tones. The two pipes of the aulos in fact played in unison, but a unison just imperfect enough to create "beats" between the notes. This is the source of that intoxicating timbre for which the instrument was known in ancient times, and for which (I like to imagine) Marsyas was so horribly punished by Apollo.

Perhaps the most useful aspect of Landels's study, beside the meticulous account of the ancient instruments, is the analysis that he gives of the rhythm and metre of Greek verse, and his account of the relation between melody and accent when this verse was performed in the theatre. The fragments which he transcribes from the existing scores are, it must be said, of no evident musical merit. But they enable us to see how closely speech rhythm and melodic line were blended in Greek performance. The effect is of mesmerising chant, in which a subliminal sense of key is constantly submerged in the microtonal division of the Greek scales.

Two of the fragments (the longest) are Delphic paens. One is an early Christian hymn. They remind us that the classical ideal of music did not detach itself from the death of Greece. If, as Landels shows, the Romans did little to preserve it. The idea of music as a continuous communion of the human and the divine was reborn after the Dark Ages in Gregorian chant. The spiritualising power of music is celebrated by Furtado and by all the poets and philosophers of Greece; but it is brought home to us in another way by plainsong. Thanks to this — the last gasp of antiquity and the first of the medieval world — we know just what it was for human life to be lived, as once it was lived, through music.



Dionysus playing a lyre

Back from the battle zone

The thing that makes you good in the ring is the very thing that makes life outside the gym impossible. Uncle Mikey says in the title story of this collection. Boxing makes sense while the rest of the world doesn't. Thom Jones's philosophy sees life as a paradox: war is deadly but makes the participants feel most alive; the body endures gruelling punishments which fuel the mind and heart to handle the bends.

Everyone is at war with themselves. A typic of Vietnam stories replete the *Break on Thru* company from Jones's earlier collection. *The Fuglist at Rest*. They are on R&R in *The Roadrunner*, in which a bird is set on fire by a soldier — an image that plays back as a bad omen during combat in *A Run Through the Jungle*. This is a gripping tale in its realism, solid with the nomenclature of war: "Pink showed up at Camp Clarke wearing Spec Five insignia and an Air Cav pink team badge."

In *Fields of Purple Forever*, Ondine from *Break on Thru* swims the length of the English channel and other seas, because "after the adrenaline of Vietnam, a six-pack and a night of TV viewing just don't cut it." Ondine is black, so too is the narrative, in alliteration and dialect. It demonstrates Jones's range of voice which make these first four stories blaze with life.

As a former boxer, Marine and epileptic, Jones can draw on a wide range of experience to lend his writing an emotional vividness. But just as you are marvelling at his gifts he vandalises his own enterprise.

RUSSELL CELYN JONES
SONNY LISTON WAS A FRIEND OF MINE
By Thom Jones
Faber & Faber, £9.99
ISBN 0 571 19656 X



In half of these stories there is a falling away from excellence. His narrative approach — a violent foreground underscored by past trauma — tends to fizzle out on a bromide. The settings continue to be hostile territories: a mental hospital, an inner city school, a neurology clinic, but his characters are too misogynistic and sadistic to be taken seriously. The voice also loses sharpness.

Jones has a lot of people rooting for him: reviewers, editors of *Playboy* and *The New Yorker* where many of these stories appeared. His publishers claim that this is "real literature instead of its shallow imitation." On aggregate this is well deserved. But I have to concur with Baudelaire's "disgust with reality" after reading the second half of this collection that forces you to reconsider the achievements of the first. Which is a pity, because when Thom Jones is good he is very, very good.

A FEW notes from the department of corrections and clarifications. In our *Bibliomane* column of January 28, we called into question the musical experience of the Director of the music publishing department of Oxford University Press, Andrew Potter. Mr Potter wishes to point out that he has extensive experience as a musician. He has been Director of the Press's music publishing for 16 years, is a choral conductor and is current Chairman of the Performing Rights Society. Our apologies. Dr C. J. Ellis writes too, from Birmingham Herdlands Hospital, regarding Peter Ackroyd's contribution in his review of *The White Death, A History of Tuberculosis* (January 21) that "whenever victims of illness hear the words 'expert' or 'specialist' they should reach for their guns", drawing parallels between early treatments for TB and those for HIV. Dr Ellis draws our attention to the great leaps medical science has made in the treatment of AIDS-related illness, and his point is well made.

Penguin Books are starting on a great enterprise — putting all 60 of Nikolaus Pevsner's massive guides to British architecture on line. They will be included in the new Chadwyck-Healey information service, KnowUK, and will be available free in about 250 public libraries, including all their branch libraries, where of course they can be immediately called up. How, we wondered, can Penguin make anything out of this? No problem, it seems. The libraries pay for a limited number of hits, and are charged more if their clients want more. An annual single-user subscription to KnowUK costs £2,400. Money in books, still.



The wolf inside the man: Neil Jordan's film *The Company of Wolves* (1984) depicted the dark side of fairy tales, where loved ones harbour cruel desires

Children's tales of sex and death

In a telling passage in her journals, Sylvia Plath bewails the contrast between the world of fairytale and the shock of real life: "Why the hell are we conditioned into the smooth, strawberry-and-cream Mother Goose world. Alice-in-Wonderland fable, only to be broken on the wheel as we grow older and become aware of ourselves as individuals with a dull responsibility in life? To learn snide and smutty meanings of words you once loved, like Fairy."

It is odd that someone so prone to seek the dark-side of the Moon could have regarded the world of Mother Goose as other than rough and dangerous, and failed to acknowledge the suggestiveness of fairytales in which fathers lust after their daughters and the prince imprisons the maiden locked in her tower. So the innocent world of Plath's fantasy dropped with blood and hos-

tile forces dwell in the darkness of its woods. Plath's contemporary Anne Sexton understood this too well. Her poem-sequences *Transformations* puts a terrifying spin on the most familiar tales.

The revisioning of fairytales has become a modern industry, from Bettelheim through Angela Carter and Margaret Atwood to Marina Warner, who has earned the role of High-Priestess to the cult. For scholars and the general reader this Norton Critical Edition, edited by Maria Tatar, will be an invaluable addition to the library, providing source texts of different tale "types", lucid introductions to the work of Perrault and the Brothers Grimm, samples of the "imitations", Hans Christian Andersen and Oscar Wilde, with a wide, useful selection of criticism.

Fairy or folk tales do not belong to anyone or anywhere: they are an expression of a col-

BEL MOONEY
THE CLASSIC FAIRY TALES
Edited by Maria Tatar
W. W. Norton, £6.95
ISBN 0 393 97277 1



lective unconsciousness, cross-cultural and kaleidoscopic. So Cinderella turns up as Yeh-hsien in China, Cenerentola in Italy, and Cindereida in Germany and "Cinderella" in England. Angela Carter likened these

variants to different ways of making potato soup all over the world, setting the tales originally told by women firmly among the domestic arts — a point first made by Plato, when he referred to the "old wives tales" told by nurses to amuse and frighten children.

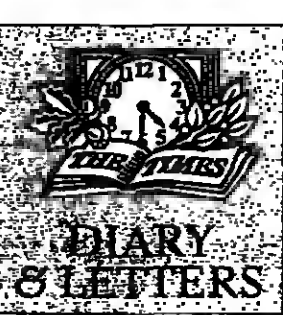
Was that all they were for? Perrault added morals to his retellings, and the brothers Grimm saw their collection as a "manual of manners". The suffering to be found within the pages of Hans Andersen is intended to arouse compassion — as poor vain Karen's amputated feet dance on in the fatal red shoes. Yet it is hard to see some of the most barbaric tales — where children are chopped up, stewed and eaten, step-parents are aided in their wickedness by indifferent natural parents, and rape is implicit — could be as "civilising" as Grimm insisted. Psychoanalysts like Bruno Bettelheim interpret such stories as expres-

sion of the deepest fears that haunt children — not of hobgoblins, but of loss and separation. The purpose was to explain life; the teller of tales interpreted to the tribe the dilemmas and dangers each of them would face.

Recent Darwinian analysis by Martin Daley and Margo Watson has sought to tell *The Truth about Cinderella* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson). They have sought to make sense of the iconic folk-type of abused step-child in terms of animal behaviour (the tendency for the arrivist male to kill existing young) but also by using evidence from societies around the world in show the shockingly high rate of abuse by step-parents. Thus the folk tale was demonstrating a truth borne out by human experience. The wolf may be out there in the darkness but the real danger is just across the room. Or reflected in the mirror, of course.

IN metro THIS SATURDAY

Alex O'Connell talks to Georgina Wroe about her novel *Slaphead*, a sideways look at post-glasnost Russia. Also meet the co-eds Cath Urquhart reviews *The Snakebite Survivors' Club*, and Shakespeare's love poetry



ANOTHER party to try to gatemash — or not, as the case may be. At the reception at PJ's Grill for Edwina Currie's new novel *The Ambassador*, on February 25, we hear that the first 100 guests will get a free book and an "Ambassador cocktail". That wouldn't be the same thing as a Molotov cocktail, would it?

The Duke of Valderano has published his memoirs, called *The Owl and the Pussyfoot*, with Minerva Press (£8.99), and as with much "vanity publishing" (where the author pays for the book to come out) there is a good deal in it about his heroic exploits in different parts of the world. But he has a good tip about eating out in Spain. When he was there with his wife ("the pussyfoot"), they called the restaurants "one-priest", "two-priest" and so on, like stars, because they always found that the more priests at the tables, the better the food.

IRIS MURDOCH, the remarkable novelist who died on Monday, had a reverence for her art — and knew just who her saints were. A friend tells us he once received from her a postcard of the great portrait of Henry James by Sargent. In the corner she had written: "Blessed H.J., pray for us."

E-mail us at: books@the-times.co.uk

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THE SUNDAY TIMES

THE SUNDAY TIMES IS THE SUNDAY PAPERS

Bargains of the week: play bridge in Hove; whisk your Valentine to Paris; take a trawler trip along the Vietnamese coast



A selection of last-minute holidays and travel opportunities at home, on the Continent and farther afield, many at bargain prices

BRITISH ISLES

DISCOUNTS are available at a choice of youth hostels between February 20 and 26, with a 25 per cent reduction on an overnight stay — with breakfast or full board — at 16 locations in England and Wales. They include Hampstead, North London, where B&B is £13.90, and full board £19.70. Details: 01727 845047.

DALE Hill hotel and golf club in East Sussex has a two-for-one room offer this month and a two-for-one tee time deal next month. Two people sharing a room will pay £54, while two golfers can choose between the old course for £20 in midweek or the Ian Woosnam course for £40. Slightly higher prices apply at weekends. Details: 01580 200112.

THE natural beauty of the Ribbles Valley, Lancashire, and the chance to improve one's own beauty are included in a weekend break with Andrew's Coaches from February 26. Leave from Derbyshire for two nights' half board plus beauty demonstrations at a former Victorian manor house with a leisure club and pool.



Take an Easter Break at picturesque Chilton Park in Kent

Priced from £119. Details: 01298 871222.

A TASTE of southern Ireland is available from £72 during March and April with Irish Ferries Holidays. Sail from Pembroke to Rosslare with a car and spend three nights with breakfast in town or country homes. The price is based on four travelling together. Details: 0990 170000.

A BRIDGE weekend in Hove, "fun and relaxing rather than competitive or intensive", takes place on March 12 to 14. A skilful host helps players to develop their game. The Acorn Activities break costs £175 with two nights' full board at the Dudley Hotel. Details: 01432 830083.

CHARNWOOD Forest and the paths around Rutland Water will be explored on a walking holiday with Whistler Breaks from March 18 to 21. Based at Melton Mowbray, the trip includes eight-mile walks each day with a guide and pub lunch, and costs from £258, with no single supplements. Details: 01743 718964.

WEEKEND visitors to the Channel Islands can enjoy special rates from Holiday Autos, starting at £49 for car hire between midday on Friday and Monday morning. Details: 0990 300411.

CHILSTON Park, the 17th-century hotel at Lenham, Kent, filled with antiques and lit by candles at night, is offering Easter breaks complete with eggs and champagne, archery and falconry. Prices start from £179 for two nights. Details: 01622 859803.



See the Norwegian fjords on a four-day trip at half term, sailing from Newcastle. A cabin for three nights is from £54

EUROPE

LAST-MINUTE love can be kindled this weekend because there is still time to book a Valentine's break, even though the day itself is on Sunday. Tony Dawe writes. Paris is the obvious choice and Kirker Holidays has two nights' B&B at central hotels, champagne and a Seine cruise from £236, including Eurostar travel. Depart tomorrow, Saturday or Sunday. Details: 0171-231 3333.

BRUSSELS is equally easy to reach by Eurostar and Sol Melia is offering discounts this weekend at its new city centre hotel. A double room with breakfast costs £65 and Eurostar has return fares for £106. Details: hotel, 0800 962720; rail, 0990 186186. Short Breaks is also featuring Valentine weekends in Brussels and in Antwerp, the world's diamond capital, from £154 for two nights with rail travel. Details: 0181-402 0007.

WHOLESOME French food and tours of the rolling countryside might be ideal attractions for more established couples this weekend, and Intravel is offering two nights' half board at a ferme auberge on the border of Flanders and Picardy for £82. The price of the break includes a Dover-to-Calais crossing for car and passengers on Saturday. Details: 01653 628862.

ROMANTICS who miss Valentine's Day can make amends by taking their partner on a proper holiday — and one of the best offers, starting with a flight from Gatwick on Tuesday, is a fortnight's half-board in Palma, Majorca, for £219 with First Choice. Details: 0870-750 0100.

CYPRUS is still marketing itself as the island of Aphrodite, goddess of love, and the prices are certainly attractive from Argo Holidays. Fly from Gatwick on February 21 or 28 and a week's self-catering in

Paphos costs £179. A fortnight's stay at the resort costs an extra £80, and flight-only deals are also available. Details: 0171-331 7070.

ISTANBUL is on offer from £269 for short breaks with Metak Holidays. Fly from Heathrow and spend three nights with breakfast in the Sunlight Hotel, close to the Blue Mosque and museums. Details: 0171-935 6961.

THREE nights for the price of two and free entry to the spectacular Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao are on offer from Mundi Color until March 25. The deal includes return flights from Heathrow and B&B at a central four-star hotel, and costs from £269. Details: 0171-828 6021.

NORWAY's stunning coastline will be the backdrop for a series of four-day bargain cruises with Fjord Line, still available over half-term. Sail from Newcastle on the next

two Saturdays or Tuesdays for a 1,000-mile journey that takes in Stavanger and Haugesund, with an overnight stop at Bergen. Prices start at £54 for three nights' cabin accommodation and breakfast, with children under 16 half-price. Details: 0191-236 1313.

SKIING in Norway and a wide range of other winter sports are on offer from Scandinavian Travel Service for departures on February 13, March 24 and April 14. Three nights' full board in Gala and return flights from Stansted cost from £270. Details: 0171-559 6666.

EASTER holidays will already be in some travellers' minds, and one of the most civilised ways of enjoying the break will surely be a six-day tour of Loire châteaux and vineyards with Arblaster & Clarke Wine Tours. The trip costs £499 with coach and overnight ferry travel (with cabin). Details: 01730 893344.

LONG-HAUL

CHINA comes closer in the coming weeks as far as price is concerned. Tony Dawe writes. For less than £500, travellers can choose between exploring Beijing or seeing how Hong Kong has changed since British rule ended in 1997.

Five-night breaks in Beijing are on offer from British Airways Holidays, including accommodation and return flights from Heathrow on Thursdays or Sundays. These are available until the end of the month for £449 from Advantage Travel Centres. Details: 0870-909 0070.

The Hong Kong trip, also for five nights, is available until March 7 from Bridge The World and costs from £498, with return flights from Heathrow. Details: 0171-911 0900.

For those who prefer something more exotic — and expensive — Bales Worldwide proposes a 16-day adventure including Beijing and the Forbidden City, the Terracotta Warriors at Xi'an, a seldom-walked stretch of the Great Wall and boat and train trips. Fly from Heathrow on March 27 and pay from £1,755. Details: 01306 885991.

NEW YORK or Boston for £149 return, including tax, is a new offer for students and under-26s from usit Campus. You must book by February 20 and complete your travel by the end of June. Los Angeles and San Francisco are also available for £195 return. Details: 0171-730 2101.

WEEKEND breaks to New York are also on offer from Funway Holidays, with three nights at a central hotel costing £315, including flights from a choice of airports. Details: 0181-466 0222.

FLY down Mexico way on February 23 from Gatwick for a week's all-inclusive Thomson holiday in Puerto or Nuevo Vallarta, which will cost £499 with Lunn Poly. Details from Holiday Shops.

ALMOND Beach Village, a leading all-inclusive resort in Barbados with half a mile of beach, nine pools and a nine-hole golf course, is available at a £270 saving until March 19 from Thomas Cook Holidays.

A week's stay now costs £1,225 with return flights from Gatwick. Details: 01733 418450.

VIETNAM is a destination with a difference, and The Imaginative Traveller is adding extra spice to an eight-day trip, starting with a flight from Heathrow on February 20. A voyage along a spectacular coastline on a converted trawler and a three-day trek through a northern hill tribe region are included in the £720 package. Details: 0181-742 8612.

THE Maldives with a week's full board is available for £889 from Somak Holidays. Choose from resorts on neighbouring islands, with the chance to sail between them to share facilities that in-



A street vendor in Vietnam

clude watersports and fishing. The flights leave from Heathrow every Sunday in March. Details: 0181-423 3000.

BASK in Banjul is the suggestion of Eclipse, which is offering a week's B&B in The Gambia for £309 with a flight from Gatwick on March 4. Details: 0990 010203.

All prices are per person and based on two sharing a room unless otherwise stated.

WEEKEND TRAVEL

See The Times on Saturday for more flight bargains and last-minute holidays

AN EXCLUSIVE OFFER

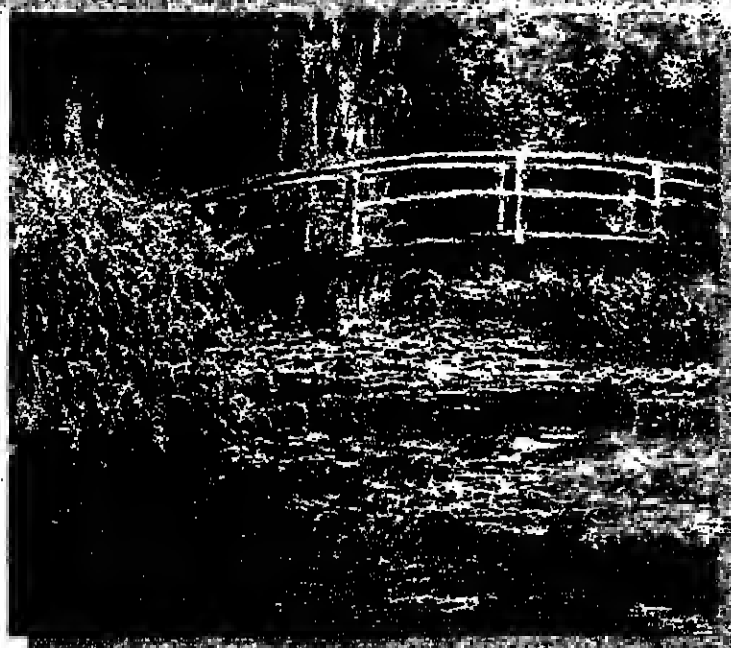
THE TIMES

FREE MONET PRINT

To celebrate the Monet exhibition at the Royal Academy, *The Times* offers every reader a FREE Monet print. *The Bridge over the Waterlily Pond*, 1900, pictured right, worth £5.99. Simply collect four of the six tokens published this week and enclose four first-class stamps to cover postage. To order your free print, use the form, below, right.

You can buy the other five of the set of six superb prints, all 24in x 20in and specially printed on fine art paper, for only £5.99 each or just £19.95 for the complete set, saving £10.

You can order this outstanding collection, including the free print, for £19.95 now (no tokens required) by calling the 24-hour credit card orderline 01242 700700. An order form for the set of prints will be published in *The Times* tomorrow.



The Bridge over the Waterlily Pond, 1900 (24in x 20in)

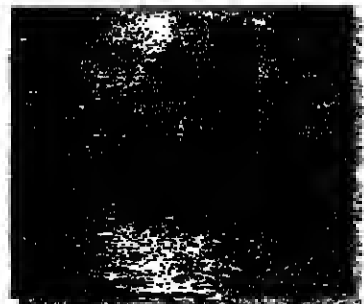
Five fine art Monet prints just £5.99 each. All six for £19.95, a saving of £10



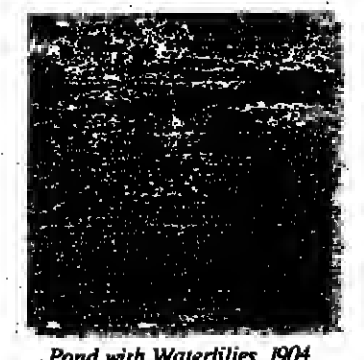
The Grand Canal, Venice, 1908



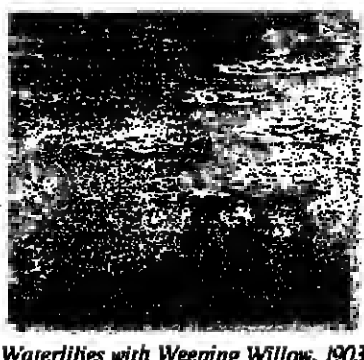
The Artist's Garden at Giverny, 1900



The Houses of Parliament, Sunset, 1904



Pond with Waterlilies, 1904



Waterlilies with Weeping Willow, 1903

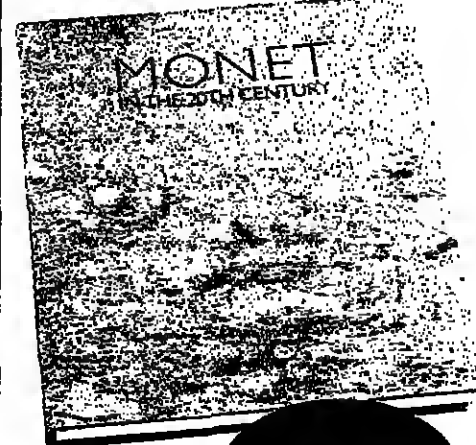
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A stylish gilt frame (26in x 22in) has been created specially to fit your free Monet print. Only £29, it comes complete with glass, backing board and is assembled ready to hang. The other five prints in the series are available in the same frame, priced at £39 each

Just £29

Collector's catalogue



Just £27 inc p&p

Beautifully printed and bound, this fabulous official catalogue of the exhibition at the Royal Academy, contains the fascinating background to Monet's life and illustrates all the paintings on view. Only £27 to *Times* readers (normal price £30) including p&p

FREE MONET PRINT ORDER FORM

To receive your free Monet print complete this form and attach four differently numbered tokens from *The Times*, plus four first class stamps to cover postage. Post it, to arrive by Monday March 1, 1999, to: *The Times* Free Monet Print Offer, Saxon House, Saxon Way, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL52 6UX. Offer subject to availability

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CHANGING TIMES

[illegible]

CRICKET

England bowlers build on Read's solid foundations

FROM THRASY PETROPOULOS IN BULAWAYO

BULAWAYO (second day of five): Zimbabwe A, with six first-innings wickets in hand, are 289 runs behind England A.

UNDAUNTED by the prospect of a lifeless pitch and stifling conditions at Queens Sports Club, England A showed commendable spirit in hiring the second international match here to life.

Frustrated, perhaps, by the batsmen's inability to make the most of a solid platform, the bowlers reduced Zimbabwe A to 94 for four in a lively

final session, still 90 runs short of avoiding the follow-on.

With Vikram Solanki suffering from a stiff neck after being hit by a stray cricket ball after close of play on the first day, England A's fortunes depended largely on Mal Loe. Unbeaten on 122 overnight, Loe, however, could only add 11 runs to his score before shouldering arms to Guy Whittall and falling leg-before.

Though inhibited in his movement, Solanki showed an impressive range of strokes in his half-century. One moment

of desperation cost him his wicket, when he swung Andy Whittall to mid-wicket.

As before on this tour, Graeme Swann batted with fluency and aggression but holed out looking to clear the infield. The tail now exposed, much of the attritional accumulation of the previous day had been wasted and it was to Chris Read's credit that a total approaching 400 was eventually reached.

Sometimes impish, always entertaining, Read's innings of 47 did as much for his reputation as it did for his side's position in the match. After being dropped a place in the order to No 8, his response revealed both character and ability.

England A's bowlers then set about consolidating on the newly gained momentum, at one stage taking three Zimbabwe A wickets for one run. Dean Cosker dismissing both Craig Wishart and Whittall and a decidedly sharp Steve Harrison having Trevor Madondo caught in the gully.

ENGLAND A: First Innings
G L Maddy c Blignaut b A R Whittall 64
M P Vaughan c A R Whittall b String 0
M B Loe b G J Whittall 133
A W T May c Madondo b String 23
A Flett b A R Whittall 2
V S Solanki c Cartledge b A R Whittall 122
G P Swann c Madondo b A R Whittall 24
T C M W Read c Gopple b String 47
D A Cosker c Gurr b G J Whittall 11
D L Lewis c Gurr b String 1
S J Harrison not out 0
Extras (b 2, lb 5, nb 6) 13
Total 363

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-12, 2-134, 3-178, 4-189, 5-270, 6-313, 7-326, 8-361, 9-374.
BOWLING: Blignaut 20-4-62-0, String 37.2-12-107-4, G J Whittall 16-6-35-2, A R Whittall 35-6-88-4, Huckle 35-12-80-0, Vipont 3-0-6-0.

ZIMBABWE A: First Innings
T R Gopple c Read b Flett 12
C B Wishart b Cosker 34
T N Madondo c Swann b Harrison 5
G J Whittall b Cosker 0
S V Cartledge not out 18
D P Wepson not out 20
Extras (b 2, nb 3) 5
Total (4 wickets) 55

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-36, 2-54, 3-55, 4-55.
BOWLING: Loe 13-6-28-0, Harrison 9-3-16-1, Flett 6-4-12-1, Cosker 9-2-20-2, Swann 2-0-15-0.
Umpires: G R Evans and E J Ginnor

Defiant Papps gives New Zealand edge

FROM JOHN STERN IN WELLINGTON

WELLINGTON (third day of four): New Zealand Under-19, with four second-innings wickets in hand, are 192 runs ahead of England Under-19.

BY THE end of this three-match series, the England Under-19 bowlers may be weary of seeing the name of Michael Papps on the scoreboard. In fact, they probably already are.

Papps, a short, compact opening bat from Canterbury, completed his second century in consecutive internationals yesterday and again turned the game marginally back in favour of New Zealand. In the first match at New Plymouth, he made a dour 64 in the first innings and then a more aggressive 117 in the second.

Having made a duck on the first morning of this match, he dropped anchor again in the second innings, batting for more than seven hours to make an invaluable 127.

Papps and Tim McIntosh put on 144 for the first wicket before McIntosh played across the line to Giles Haywood and was leg-before. Tucker took the second wicket of the day when Brad Pittou cut and was caught behind, though Tucker's involvement in proceedings was soon terminated.

Both he and Bulbeck, the two Somerset members of the tour party, limped off in mid-afternoon. Bulbeck had problems with his left ankle and Tucker broke down during an over holding his knee.

The loss of two seamers left Michael Gough, the England captain, little choice but to bowl his spinners. Graeme Bridge, the slow left-arm and a Durham team-mate of Gough, took three wickets in the final hour, including that of Papps, who was leg-before. England lead 1-0 in the series.

Scoreboard, page 45



Pirie's outstanding performance in Vail has left her considering competing on the downhill circuit next season

The world championships get under way in earnest for the Great Britain team in Vail today, with five racers competing in the final four technical events.

Tessa Pirie's thirteenth place in the women's combined is Britain's best result from the first week and the 20-year-old student will compete in the giant slalom today.

It is more than ten years since Britain had a woman downhill and with Amanda, her 18-year-old sister, taking a thirtieth place at the French junior championships, the Pirie sisters could soon become a female replacement for the Bell brothers.

"I went into the downhill with a clear mind, none of that 'I'm from a small nation stuff', because I know I am capable of it," Tessa Pirie said. "The safest way to race is to attack the course and I attacked it big time. It was fast and I got big air off the jumps but I felt in control."

Britain's only male downhill after the retirement of Graham and Martin Bell is Andrew Freshwater, 25, who came 24th in the downhill but was one of the later starters hampered by fresh snow.

Britain's youth learning fast

Graham Duffill sees the country's hopes for the future show strength on the slopes

The women's giant slalom today will see the debut of Chennay Alcott, 16, alongside Emma Carrick-Anderson, who finished in eleventh place in the slalom in the last world championship in Sestriere, Italy. Carrick-Anderson, 23, is travelling and training with the Finland team, which is restoring her mental strength after a wearing ten-month tour alone last season.

"Last season was horrible, I was lonely," she said. "Training with the Finnish team has made such a difference. At the beginning of the season I didn't have any complications, I was just going for it and when I think I can be up there with these guys, things go my way. I qualified fourteenth for the first World Cup from a start number of 60 and that proved to me that I can still do it after Sestriere."

Alcott has the distinction of being ranked second in the world for her age in giant slalom and third in the slalom. Last season she won the Continental Cup series in Australasia, the youngest skier to do so and the first Briton.

Alan Baxter, who will race in the giant slalom and slalom, has been training with the Finnish men and says he is skiing better than ever before. Baxter's world ranking has leapt from No 540 two years ago to 87 and he began the season with a 32nd place in the slalom in Park City. Baxter has been preparing for the world championship by dropping to the lowest-level circuit and competing in International Ski Federation

Green's experience highlights how money and developing a youth team could turn the fortunes of British skiing around. "One of the biggest achievements has been getting the British junior team up and running again after a long gap," Mike Jardine, chief executive of the British Ski Federation, said. "For the last five or six years we have been arguing for a junior team and we are beginning to see the benefits of it now."

SNOOKER

Wembley crowd left wanting more

BY PHIL YATES

SLOW hand-clapping and concerted booing broke out at the Wembley Conference Centre yesterday when the crowd was denied the opportunity of witnessing the end of the second-round match between Peter Ebdon and Mark King at the Benson and Hedges Masters.

With Ebdon leading 5-1, and one frame away from a quarter-final against John Higgins, play was suspended in order to allow Ronnie O'Sullivan and James Wattana to begin their contest on time.

The suspension, at 5.55pm, some 50 minutes before O'Sullivan and Wattana were due to enter the arena, was only the third such occurrence in the 25-history of the event. It was unpopular with the crowd of 719 and the players alike.

"This is a bad decision," Ebdon said, on being informed of the news by Alan Chamberlain, the referee. King's aggrieved expression and body language left no doubt that he agreed.

The changes, although far from fluent, could not be described as torridly slow. Failure to concede in a series of frames when an unlikely number of snookers were required, and regular toilet breaks between frames, had contributed to the problem.

King, who had prevailed in only one of his five matches this season before he edged out Jimmy White 6-5 on the pink in the wild-card play-off round on Sunday, recovered from a 2-0 deficit to lead 3-2 before Ebdon found his range.

Ebdon regained the advantage at 4-3, King won a scrappy eighth frame, but Ebdon claimed a low-scoring ninth.

The silver anniversary celebration of the Masters will feature a parade of former champions before the concluding session of the final on Sunday. Only Alex Higgins and John Spencer, because of ill-health, and Doug Mountjoy, who is coaching in the United Arab Emirates, will be absent.

SATURDAY. ANYTHING BUT A DAY OF REST.

SPORT
Vision
WEEKEND
metro
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THE TIMES



Acclimatising: Rogers trains in North London in the clothes that he will wear in Antarctica in the first of his seven marathons on seven continents

Here's the story of one sportsman who would undoubtedly test positive for what may be the most effective performance-enhancer of all — obsession.

While the tarnished fat cats of the International Olympic Committee were wasting hours and thousands of dollars debating whether sportsmen should be tested and banned for taking everything from poison to cough mixture, they might have been better employed working out what strange substance really makes a sportsman attempt something crazy.

Obsession is what does it for most of them and they don't come more obsessive than a fit, fair-haired runner from Chester, Tim Rogers. Today finds him somewhere close to the South Pole, limbering up for a marathon. Well, seven marathons, actually, for he is setting out on the most outrageous globe-trotting adventure that he and his support team could dream up. He is, he declared, about to slog his way through seven marathons on seven continents in 77 days.

At 35 years old, and with a full-time job working for the Littlewoods catalogue company, Rogers is one of that breed of runners who cover the distance, not to run fast times and carry off prizes, but to satisfy a personal obsession with a challenge. They are a breed let loose on the streets of Britain by Chris Brasher when he

The mother of all marathons



dreamt up the first London Marathon at the beginning of the 1980s. In April, thousands of them will be at it again in London, raising millions for charity.

But for the true obsessive, one marathon is never enough. They fear that running 26 miles has become too routine an affair — with granules and people with one leg doing it — so they need to seek out ever stronger doses of the impossible. Hence the ambition of Tim Rogers. He wants his own spot in the Guinness Book of Records.

His preparation for the Antarctica Marathon will take in a stomach-testing ocean crossing through rough seas from Tierra del Fuego past Cape Horn to the bleak, ice-hard land where the Atlantic and Pacific oceans meet. This is not a pleasant running country. It is an icy desert with the risk of blinding blizzards, and fewer than 160 runners, most of them from New Zealand, South Africa and the United States, will be making the start line on King George Island. It is only the third time

that this marathon has been staged and the organisers say it will be the last, so Rogers has only this one chance of fulfilling his obsessive dream. "It will undoubtedly be the toughest marathon I will ever face," he said, "I dread the boat crossing. Apparently each time they've had this race some of the runners never get over the seasickness and can't even start it. But I've trained furiously for this and I'm determined not to collapse at the first hurdle."

After he runs in the Antarctic on Saturday, he has only a fortnight between each of his next two efforts — the Cape Town Marathon in South Africa on February 28 and the

Hong Kong on March 14. Just one week later he flies to Hawaii for the Maui Marathon on March 21, then it's back to Europe for the Paris Marathon on April 4.

Less than a fortnight after that, Rogers will leave his home in Chester for Chile and the Santiago Marathon on April 18.

Then he's off to the other side of the globe for the climax of his round-the-world in 77 days adventure — a run in the Rotorua Marathon in New Zealand on May 1.

The "record" that he hopes to beat on May Day belongs to a Japanese athlete, Hajime Nishi, who ran marathons on seven continents in seven months.

Of course, being a genuinely obsessive marathon runner and traveller, Rogers has not stepped on to this crazy, record-setting treadmill overnight. During the past 18 months he has already knocked off 13 marathons in places as far flung as Costa Rica, Cape Town, Copenhagen and Sydney. Every time he pulls on his racing shoes he

raises thousands for charity and on his latest adventure he is coming to for Comic Relief, Weston Spirit (a charity headed by the Falkland veteran, Simon Weston), Cottage Homes and a number of local charities.

Rogers knows that by attacking so many marathons he can never go for speed. He ran his fastest for the distance (a modest 3hr 50min) in Sydney, but only then because he had to. The start of the race was delayed by an hour and a half, which left him with a problem catching his flight home.

So he ran faster than ever before, was whisked away from the finish line by a marshal's car and arrived at the airport, still in his running gear, just in time to sweat up the aircraft steps before the doors were shut.

You might think that if Rogers lurches to the finish line in New Zealand in May, with his seven marathons on seven continents behind him, he might relax with his obsession satisfied. Forget it.

"There's still the Everest Marathon and the Sahara Marathon," he said, "and on January 1, 2000, there's only one place to be — back in New Zealand running a marathon in the first part of the world to see the sun rise that day."

Marathon Millennium obsession — now that is serious.

JOHN BRYANT

DRUGS IN SPORT: SWIMMER AND SHOT PUTTER TO USE NEW EVIDENCE IN BID TO PROVE THEIR INNOCENCE

De Bruin's campaign lifted by revelation

By DAVID POWELL, ATHLETICS CORRESPONDENT

EVIDENCE which came to light yesterday that the security packs used to transport urine samples for drug-testing could be opened and resealed without detection has raised Michelle de Bruin's hopes of being cleared of a doping offence and has given Paul Edwards cause for double celebration.

De Bruin, who was Michelle Smith when she won Olympic swimming gold medals for Ireland in 1996, said last night that her attempt to prove her innocence had been enhanced significantly by the development. Edwards, the Great Brit-

ain international shot putter, who was banned for life but freed yesterday to compete, pending a hearing, said he would use the new evidence as part of his defence.

Edwards was suspended in 1994 for four years and later banned for life for a second offence. However, UK Athletics has deemed that Edwards's hearing under the former governing body, the British Athletic Federation, was inadequate and the 1990 Commonwealth bronze medal-winner intends to compete on Saturday in an

open meeting at Crystal Palace, three days before his fortieth birthday.

Dr David Brown, a chemist, has shown how the Versapak security containers used to collect the samples from Smith and Edwards could be tampered with by placing them in boiling water, opening the lid with a kitchen knife and resealing while leaving the ring-pull unopened. The UK Sports Council (UKSC) used the Versapak equipment for three years up to May 1998, before changing supplier. De Bruin's case is due to be heard by the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Lausanne on May 3.

Peter Lennon, De Bruin's legal adviser, said that this latest development would have "a very significant effect on her case". Lennon added: "We had already raised at the doping control panel hearing the fact that we believed this was in the public domain by virtue of an Internet website. That was not accepted by the doping control panel in so far as they said it was a theoretical possibility and no more than that."

"Now that it has been proved by David Brown, it does give lack of credibility to the argument by the Fina [international governing body] doping panel that if it was not the athlete, who else could it have been? There is now a credible argument that the Versapak kit system in operation at the time was rubbish."

Speaking on RTE Irish radio last night, De Bruin said:

"This is only one string in our bow in terms of the evidence. Peter will be bringing to Lausanne, but it certainly gives a lot of credence to what we knew all along, that this type of Versapak can be tampered with. It can be done in three minutes and it is impossible to detect the canister has been tampered with."

The UKSC attempted in a statement to "quash suggestions that the sample collection equipment used in recent years under its procedures could be manipulated easily". However, it stopped short of shooting down Dr Brown's evidence and declined to when questioned.

A spokesman for Versapak admitted that one of its products used until May last year could have been tampered with. "We have not changed the material," the spokesman said.

"What we did last year was to modify the design so that it is impossible to gain access to the container by this method. Opening the container when it was in common use in the past was a matter of opportunity, time, tools and motivation."

In explaining why Edwards had been allowed to return, Jayne Pearce, speaking for UK Athletics, said: "We have been advised that there were inconsistencies with regard to the hearing." Edwards said: "I have maintained from the beginning that the samples tested were either not mine or have been interfered with."



Edwards: banned for life



De Bruin: arbitration

WORD-WATCHING

Answers from page 33

BULLI

(c) An eponym of Bulli, a town south of Sydney, New South Wales, used (chiefly attributively) to designate a type of soil used especially for cricket pitches.

DVORNIK

(c) A house-porter. The Russian dvor means a door. "I said good-night to every one. I could hear the laughter as I walked at the bottom of the stairs for the dvornik to let me out."

GILLION

(a) A name sometimes used for 1,000 million by writers wishing to avoid the ambiguity between American and British uses of billion.

ANGAREB

(c) A stretcher or light bedstead used by the Arabs, and in Egypt and the Sudan. The native name.

SOLUTION TO WINNING MOVE

1 Ne6! fxe6 ... 2 Rh8-Kg7! 12 Kxh8.3 Qx7! threatening Rh1 ... 3 Rh7-Kxh7 ... 4 Qf7-Kh6 ... 5 Rh1 checkmate

Monday's solution should have been: 1 Qxe8-K! Qxe8; 2 d7 Qd8; 3 Bg5 and wins

TELEVISION CHOICE

Tonight is crime night

The Bill

ITV, 8.00pm

Thursday night is obviously crime night on ITV but both this one and the *The Knock* are worth singling out. In *The Age of Chivalry* an hysterical young woman is picked up by a patrol car as she sangers, muddled and bloodied, out of dark woodland. She is articulate (just) in her description of the two men who held her down and raped her and they are eventually traced to a local wine bar where one works as a waiter. He turns out to be the son of a strait-laced father and a long-suffering mother — and he hates women. Surprisingly, it is DCI Burnside (Christopher Ellison) who comes across as gentle and understanding — especially compared with his add-tongued colleague Liz (Libby Davies) when they cross-examine the pair. Burnside puts rape almost on a par with murder so why then does he allow both men to go free?

The Knock

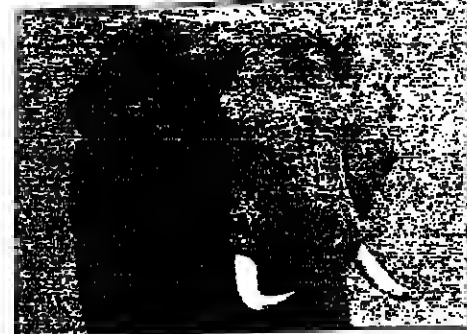
ITV, 9.00pm

Cherie Lunghi continues to play the *femme fatale* of the "business world" (drug running to you and me) and it's worth watching this last of an often thrilling, certainly expensive (no fake foreign locations here) series just to catch her face move in five different directions at once as she pursues ladies (apparently), drug barons (less apparently) and big money. Tonight's plot ties up — more or less — the three-part story involving heroin traffic from Bangkok, through Delhi to Amsterdam and London. If the dialogue — "in my office" now! "you — a word!" — leaves something to be desired the pace is so frenetic that blink and you could miss a clue. I'm still trying to work out how a certain Mr Smoothie manages to smuggle in Mercedes cars by carting around wheelbarrows full of dirt. What have I missed here?

Meet the Ancestors

BBC2, 9.00pm

The Black Hand — a symbol of just that — runs through this archaeological mystery to make it one of the most fascinating programmes in the series. When a farmer near Chester investigates a strange mound on his land he begins an excavation of the remains of Poulton Chapel, built by Cistercians



Horizon examines the changing fortunes of the African elephant (BBC2, 9.30pm)

monks in the 12th century. Archaeologists working with artists, genealogists and carbon dating equipment reconstruct this charming little abbey — but there's more. Among the people buried there it would seem that pride of place has gone to one Sir Nicholas Manley, a wealthy Anglo-Frenchman whose family used the chapel in the 16th century. Manley? Main is French for hand and his were apparently spectacular. His coat of arms was a black hand ... could there be any living Manleys who might boast such an insignia? As the presenter Julian Richards reveals — there are, and they do. It is an extraordinary story.

Horizon: Elephants or Ivory

BBC2, 9.30pm

A documentary which in some ways covers old arguments but which will make you think afresh about the future of the African elephant. Adrian Pennick's disturbing film travels to the great elephant reserves of Kenya and the communal lands of Zimbabwe and the Kruger National Park in South Africa. Viewers can hear for themselves the arguments of local zoologists and ecologists — and many of them feel that a sensible culling of the great creatures is not only to their advantage — there are now too many elephants to survive in their natural habitats — but that the desperately poor people of Zimbabwe need the profits that ivory would bring.

Elizabeth Cowley

RADIO CHOICE

Ruskin at 100

Radio 4, 8.00pm

The great colleges of our great universities have such familiar names that most of us never stop to wonder about their history, which is not the least of the reasons to welcome this fascinating half-hour about Ruskin College, Oxford, which held its founding meeting in Oxford Town Hall on February 22, 1899. As Steve Richards shows here, this meeting was truly radical. It was to establish the first major college dedicated to the further education of the working man, and within a few years it would become the educational hub of the labour movement. John Prescott and Roy Jenkins are among those taking part tonight but the programme is more than a history; it also asks whether in the age of New Labour, Ruskin has a role.

RADIO 1 (BBC)

6.30am Zee Ball 9.00 Simon Mayo 12.00pm Kevi Greening 2.00 Mark Radcliffe 4.00 Chris Moyles 5.45 Newsbeat 6.00 Dave Pearce 8.00 Steve Lamacq The Evening Session 10.00 Trade Update 10.10 John Peel Session tracks from Comas 12.00am Andy Kershaw 2.00 Dave Warren 4.00 Scott Mills

RADIO 2 (BBC)

6.00am Alex Lester 7.30 Wake Up to Wogan 9.30 Richard Allen 12.00pm Jimmy Young 2.00 Ed Stewart 5.00 Johnnie Walker 7.00 David Allen 8.00 Paul Jones 9.00 Puff and Doreen It's Been a Bad Week New series. A light-hearted look at the week's news stories (1/5) 8.30 Comedy Showcase: Canned Heat, Mark's mini-mat becomes a sex-free zone (4/7) 10.00 Moby Talks Jazz 10.30 Nicky Home 12.00am Kaitera Leckwith 3.00 Mo'Nique

RADIO 5 LIVE (BBC)

5.00am Morning Reports 8.00 Breakfast with Julian Worricker and Victoria Derbyshire 9.00 Nicky Campbell 12.00pm The Midday News 1.00 Race and Co 4.00 Drive 7.00 News Extra 7.30 Hardest Game 8.00 Inside Edge 9.00 Hoops 9.30 Sportsnap 10.00 Late Night Live 1.00am Up All Night

TALK RADIO

6.00am The Big Boys Breakfast 9.00 Scott Chisholm 12.00pm My Favourite Year 1.00 Anne Robinson 3.00 Peter Dinkley 5.00 The SportZone 7.00 One to One with Andy Gray 8.00 James White 1.00am Ian Collins and the Creatures of the Night

VIRGIN

8.30am Chris Evans 9.30 Mark Forster 1.00pm Nick Abbot 4.00 Janet Scott 6.45 Peter and Gail 10.00 James Merritt 1.00am Steve Power 4.30 Richard Allen

RADIO 3

6.00am On Air with Petros Trelawny 9.00 Masterworks with Penny Gore 10.30 Artist of the Week: Leonard Shatkin 11.00 Sound Stories: Five Femmes Fatales (4/5) 12.00pm Composer of the Week: Telemann 1.00 The Radio 3 Lunchtime Concert Live Qn. cello, Greta Dowd, piano 2.00 The BBC Orchestras BBC Philharmonic 4.00 Ensemble (1) 4.45 Music Machine with Venty Sharp 5.00 In Tune with Sean Rafferty 7.00 Performance on 3 Live from the Festival Hall See Choice 8.10 London Mozart Players at 50 8.30 Concert part two 9.45 Postscript: Magnum at the Millennium The

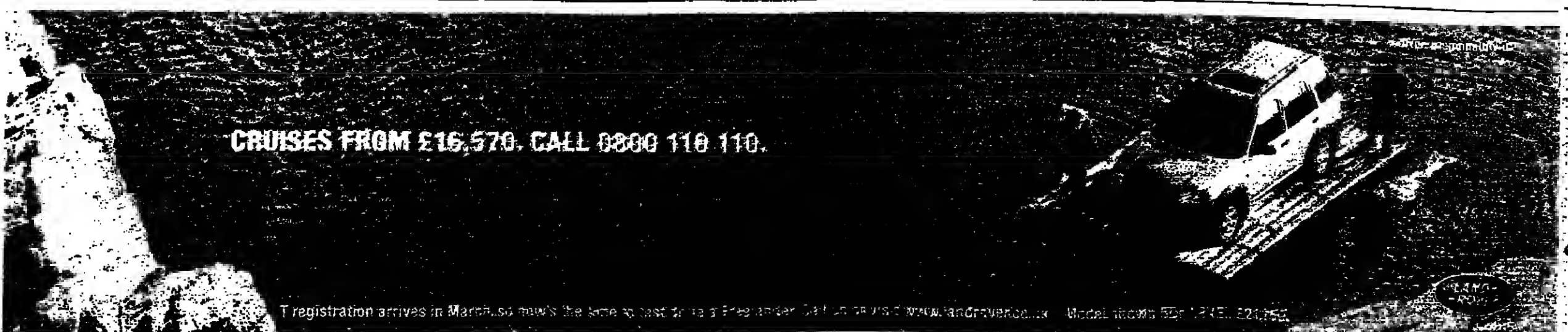
RADIO 4

5.30am World News 5.35 Shipping Forecast 6.00 Inshore Forecast 6.45 Prayer for the Day 5.47 Farming Today 6.00 Today 8.35 (LW) Yesterday in Parliament 9.00 Melvyn Bragg: In Our Time 9.30 Matchmakers with Jo Morn (1) 9.45 (FM) Serials: Tulip with Anna 9.45 (LW) Daily Service Director of music Alan Wilson 10.00 Women's Hour with Jenni Murray 11.00 From Our Own Correspondent 11.30 Fat Chance New series (1/5) 12.00 (LW) News Headlines: Shipping Forecast 12.00pm (FM) News 12.04 You and Yours 1.00 The World at One 1.30 Country 2.00 The Archers Yesterday (1) 2.15 Afternoon Play: Cuban Solo by David Powell 3.00 Call You and Yours 0870 010 0444

shaping events and movements of the postwar era (4/5) (1) 10.10 Music Restored Lucie Shapling introduces a selection of music in praise of the Virgin 10.45 Night Waves Paul Allen talks to Thomas L. Thompson, about his new book 11.30 Jazz Notes with Alyn Shipton 12.00am Composer of the Week: Liszt (1) 1.00 Through the Night 1.00 Concerto Koln, Sakari (Piano Concerto in C), Mozart (Piano Concerto No 19 in F, K488; Symphony No 40 in G minor, K550) 2.25 Saver (Nocturne in C, Op 34) 3.00 Schools 5.00 Rach - minnow, an English Prattle in C sharp minor, Op 3 No 2) 5.35 Mozart (Flute Concerto No 2 in D, K314)

3.30 Going, Going, Gone (4/5) (1) 3.45 This Scattered Tale 4.00 Law in Action 4.30 The Material World with Trevor Phillips 5.00 PM 6.00 Six O'Clock News 6.30 Yes, Minister (1) 7.00 The Archers 7.15 Front Row 7.45 Speaking for Themselves (1) 8.00 Radio 4 at 100 See Choice 8.30 The Week in Westminster 9.00 Testbeds with Vanessa Collingridge 9.30 Melvyn Bragg: In Our Time (1) 10.00 The World Tonight with Robin Lustig 10.45 Book at Bedtime: Mark Twain Stories (1) 11.00 Late Night on 4: The Way It Is Saver 11.30 (FM) A Good Read (1) 11.30 (LW) Today in Parliament 12.00am News 12.30 The Late Book: Lamorna's Tale 12.45 Shipping Forecast 1.00 As World Service

FREQUENCY GUIDE: RADIO 1, FM 97.6-99.8, RADIO 2, FM 88.0-90.2, RADIO 3, FM 90.2-92.4, RADIO 4, FM 92.4-94.6, LW 198, MW 720, RADIO 5 LIVE, MW 693, 900, WORLD SERVICE, MW 648, LW 198 (12.45-5.55am), CLASSIC FM, FM 100-102, VIRGIN RADIO, FM 105.8, MW 1197, 1215, TALK RADIO, MW 1053, 1058, Television and radio listings compiled by Ian Hughes, Rosemary Smith, Susan Thomson, Jane Gregory and John McNamee



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Warning. Your love can turn sour, too

As James Kent's *Inside Story: Heartbreak* (BBC1) supposed to make us feel better about the arrival of St Valentine's Day and the promise of new love? Or was it just warning us that however great the rollercoaster of love might feel on the way up, it feels so bad on the way down that even being allowed to sleep Linda Tripp peacefully with wet fish (plais is good) wouldn't make you feel any better.

Here were men and women who'd had their hearts broken into so many pieces that, like a smashed glass, they were impossible to put back together again. At times, just listening to their stories made you feel like an intruder. Here was a woman who had re-told the tale of her husband's desertion so many times that she'd run out of friends, run out of therapists, run out of agony aunts, run out of radio phone-ins to tell it to: there was only the TV camera.

and us, left. She looked like any other middle-aged woman who still cared enough to dress well, dab on make-up, fix her hair. Only she wept, unable to stop herself, and if you were to cut through her she'd be like a human stick of rock, only with the name "Richard" running through her instead of "Blackpool" or "Skegness".

"I don't know what made me stop by the room where the phone was, but I did. I don't know why," she recalled. "And all I heard was his voice saying, 'Hello, how are you... You're all right... I'm sorry, I'm still at a meeting... But you're all right. I'll ring you tomorrow. Bye.' I went into the sitting room and just stood there and he came in and took one look at me and said, 'What's the matter with you?' I said, 'Richard, you've just rung another woman', and he just flew into the most fantastic rage and he stormed out.

This happened 25 years ago, and

still she can replay the scene as vividly as a video in her mind's eye. She knows the script as fluently as an actress locked into a long run at a theatre. "I exist until I die," was the roughest gloss she was willing to put on her future.

James Kent, treading as warily as a cat burglar through all this bitterness and heartache, nevertheless left no stone unturned in his determination to show us that any love can turn sour. A man in Telford had left his partner heartbroken after deciding to share his life with a woman; in Massachusetts whom he had just met in an Internet chat room. Angela's husband ran off with the babysitter. Neil abandoned Dawn and their children to move in with another man. A daughter had set up home with her sister's husband. "It's like a death," sobbed the mother of the two women, "only she's only up the road."

REVIEW



Joe Joseph

Heartbreak hit these people like an oncoming truck. Some survived the crash, others are crippled for life. This painful, moving film is what *The Jerry Springer Show* might be like if the participants weren't behaving with that demented exaggeration that has become the template for Confessional TV.

But it's not always a woman who breaks a man's heart. The final, taut episode of *Jerry*

Crowther's *Mersey Blues* (BBC2) left you wondering if Elmore Davies — the disgraced Detective Chief Inspector who fell into Crowther's net while she was making her fly-on-the-wall series about Merseyside cops — wasn't another story about a man spurned by the only thing he had ever truly loved: the police force.

Davies, who was arrested for corruption in March 1997, is behind bars. But Crowther's homing instinct for tension left you guessing almost until the last about Davies's guilt. We heard that months of round-the-clock surveillance had unearthed nothing. Everything in his career pointed to a man who had never been bought by the mob. Crowther teased us into speculating whether it was wrongly accused, maybe even fitted up by enemies within the force who bristled at his manner.

But then Davies — a burly

Michelin of a man — slowly deflated on hearing that he hadn't got the career promotion he'd pinned for. You could actually see the life quiver hissing out of him. Was it coincidence, careful editing, or cause-and-effect that, shortly after this snub, a man who in 32 years on the force had no record of corruption, reacted as furiously as a woman scorned by suddenly selling himself to the other side?

Heartbreak is so painful, then it seemed perfectly sensible for Samuel West, the narrator of *Battle of the Sexes* (BBC2), to ask the key question of the evening: "Why bother with sex at all?"

Some animals avoid the risk of heartbreak by doing away with males altogether. These females just clone their babies. Sam insisted that "in a perfect and stable world it's likely that all females of all species would prefer to clone". Males are useful only because they

help to introduce some genetic variability. Well phooey to genetic variability, said the whip-tailed lizards of Arizona and New Mexico, and did away with men long ago. Now they are perfectly suited to desert life and don't want male genes messing this up.

Female whip-tailed lizards still have to *pretend* to copulate, because the motions of sex stimulate their ovaries. But once they dismount I'll bet they giggle all night about how clumsy males are, while chain-smoking Sobranies and singing Marlene Dietrich songs.

Well, just wait till their daughters log into an Internet lizard chat room, glimpse the lizard equivalent of Brad Pitt e-mailing them from Brazil, and start nagging their mums to let them stay out late to experience some genetic variability: then those smug whip-tailed females will get to see what heartbreak's all about!

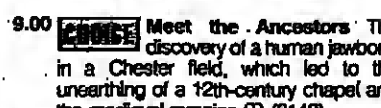
- BBC1**
- 6.00am Business Breakfast (24065)
 - 7.00am BBC Breakfast News (7) (97362)
 - 9.00am Killy (7) (8081817)
 - 9.45am The Vanessa Show (7) (4480482)
 - 10.55am News: Regional News, Weather (7) (6552255)
 - 11.00am Real Roads (6562633)
 - 11.25am Can't Cook, Won't Cook (7) (6532482)
 - 11.55am News: Regional News, Weather (7) (1722573)
 - 12.00pm Call My Bluff (58053)
 - 12.30pm Wipeout (1130351)
 - 12.55pm The Weather Show (7) (48288343)
 - 1.00pm One O'Clock News: Weather (7) (67121)
 - 1.30pm Regional News: Weather (47900411)
 - 1.40pm Neighbours (7) (2599696)
 - 2.05pm Live Snooker: Benson and Hedges Masters: Doug Denny introduces early quarter-final action from Wembley Conference Centre (5943527)
 - 2.55pm Body Spies: A couple of celebrity lookers go on a diet (5297817)
 - 3.25pm Children's BBC: Playdays (610546)
 - 3.45pm The All New Popeye Show (2097430)
 - 3.55pm Pocket Dragon Adventures (2093614)
 - 4.05pm Anthony Ant (6502256)
 - 4.20pm Home Farm Twins (6531121)
 - 4.35pm Short Change (5975411)
 - 5.00pm Newsround (2422679)
 - 5.10pm Grange Hill (5057121)
 - 5.33pm Rewind (7) (181343)
 - 5.35pm Neighbours: Paul and Hannah's relationship reaches crisis point (7) (501018)
 - 6.00pm Six O'Clock News: Weather (7) (60183)
 - 6.30pm Regional News Magazine (492)
 - 7.00pm Watchdog with Anne Robinson: Consumer investigation show (7) (7817)
 - 7.30pm EastEnders: Ruth makes a momentous decision (7) (904)
 - 8.00pm Barking Mad: Vets and animal behaviour experts offer advice to people with problem pets, helping the frustrated owners of a collie which has taken over the family home (7) (237)
 - 8.30pm Fat Free Trainers: Puts her new cooking skills to the test by preparing Christmas lunch for 14 people (6/6) (7) (5072)
 - 9.00pm Nine O'Clock News: Regional News: Weather (7) (7898)



Amanda Burton stars as the pathologist Dr Sam Ryan (9.30pm)

- 9.30pm Silent Witness: Sam investigates the murder of a glamorous estate agent whose body was discovered in an empty house. Amanda Burton stars as the sceptical forensic expert (7) (10527)
- 11.00pm Question Time: Topical debate from Southampton (7) (645140)
- 12.00am Newsround to Blood City (1977) 7.00am Wild West: Sci-fi adventure, starring Jack Palance, Samantha Eggar, Ken Dullea and Barry Moore. Directed by Peter Sasdy (7) (3579638)
- 1.35pm Weather (6519586)
- 1.40pm BBC News 24 (33313524)

- BBC2**
- 7.00pm Children's BBC Breakfast Show: Open a Door (324866)
 - 7.05pm Teletubbies (6165508)
 - 7.30pm Snorks (6545275)
 - 7.55pm Blue Peter (4025558)
 - 8.20pm Taz-Mania (7037255)
 - 8.40pm Police Dot Shorts (3016904)
 - 8.50pm Fiddley Fiddle Bird (3012189)
 - 9.00pm Job Bank (4780881)
 - 9.10pm Brief File (4838701)
 - 9.30pm Watch (1928545)
 - 9.45pm Come Outside (1916701)
 - 10.00pm Teletubbies (51072)
 - 10.30pm Storytime (2913695)
 - 10.45pm Teaching Today (816277)
 - 11.15pm Zog Zap (891168)
 - 11.35pm Pathways of Steel (8622548)
 - 11.50pm Job Bank (4450681)
 - 12.00pm Job Bank (7141548)
 - 12.10pm English File (9679324)
 - 12.30pm Working Lunch (82878)
 - 1.00pm Fiddley Fiddle Bird (4268183)
 - 1.10pm The Travel Hour: France's Dordogne and Perigord regions (7) (9925865)
 - 2.10pm Wildlife on Two: The ground-hornbill of the African savannah (7) (10107194)
 - 2.40pm News: Weather (7) (3337782)
 - 2.45pm Westminster (7) (2890324)
 - 3.25pm News: Weather (7) (2959102)
 - 3.30pm Live Snooker: Benson and Hedges Masters: The conclusion of the first best-of-11-frames quarter-final (501873)
 - 6.00pm Star Trek: Deep Space Nine: Kiri is forced to make a choice (7) (289081)
 - 6.45pm Live Snooker: Benson and Hedges Masters (464184)
 - 7.30pm Regional programmes (7) (546)
 - 8.00pm The Travel Show: Ideas on millennium destinations (7) (1678)
 - 8.30pm Jeremy Clarkson's Extreme Machines: Sweden's state-of-the-art, high-powered swamp-buggies in Florida and a mechanical clock (7) (3614)



The reconstructed head of a medieval landowner (9pm)

- 9.00pm **ANCESTRALS**: Meet the -Ancestors- The discovery of a human jawbone in a Chester field, which led to the unearthing of a 12th-century chapel and the medieval remains (7) (8140)
- 9.30pm **HORIZON**: A journey from the elephant reserves of Kenya, through Zimbabwe to the Kruger National Park to investigate the potential consequences of lifting the ban on ivory trading in Africa (7) (277508)
- 10.20pm Meetings with Remarkable Trees: An ancient sweet chestnut (7) (359343)
- 10.30pm Newsnight (7) (202614)
- 11.15pm Snooker: Benson and Hedges Masters: Highlights of day five (353072)
- 11.55pm Skilling Forecast (519968)
- 12.00am Despatch Box: Political news (35763)
- 12.30pm BBC Learning Zone: Open University: Athens — Democracy for the Few 1.00pm Culture: The Walkman 1.00pm Day Out: Their Way 2.00pm Education: Customer Care 4.00pm Languages: The French Experience 17.20pm 5.00pm Teacher Training: Central Bureau 5.30pm The Bridge: Starting Secondary School 5.45pm Open University: Rejourna — Music of Mail 6.10pm Global Mail

- HTV**
- 5.30am HTV Morning News (82275)
 - 6.00am GMTV (3899558)
 - 9.25pm Triha (7) (541343)
 - 10.30pm This Morning (7) (1154850)
 - 12.15pm HTV News (7) (7124879)
 - 12.30pm HTV Lunchtime News (7) (90643)
 - 1.00pm Shortland Street: Lions in the doordrums (52817)
 - 1.30pm Home and Away (7) (40184)
 - 2.00pm The Jerry Springer Show (7) (5868782)
 - 2.45pm Dale's Supermarket Sweep: The shopping quiz of Britain (7) (975886)
 - 3.15pm HTV News: Weather (7) (4759184)
 - 3.30pm HTV News (7) (790607)
 - 3.25pm City: Mopshop's Shop (8156940)
 - 3.35pm The Adventures of Dowdle (315701)
 - 3.45pm The Sylvester and Tweety Mysteries (3148237)
 - 4.15pm Hey Arnold! (331695)
 - 4.40pm Children's Ward (2206614)
 - 5.10pm A County Practice (5207411)
 - 5.35pm HTV Crime: The Potters (7) (151089)
 - 6.00pm Home and Away: Alan has an unpleasant experience (7) (440508)
 - 6.25pm WALES: Wales Tonight (7) (54711)
 - 6.25pm WEST: HTV Weather (7) (21232)
 - 6.30pm WEST: The West Tonight (7) (188)
 - 7.00pm Emmerdale (7) (2885)
 - 7.30pm WEST: We Can Work It Out: With reports on the problem of new cars which spring leaks (512)
 - 7.30pm WALES: Forgotten Treasures: Wales's very own Flipper (7) (512)
 - 8.00pm **CHANCE**: The Bill: The Bill and Rawlin arrest a waiter on suspicion of raping a woman outside a Tube station — but the man is being helped by an accomplice and has an alibi (7) (1584)



Cherie Lunghi as Toni and Caroline Lee Johnson as Diane (9pm)

- 9.00pm **CHANCE**: The Knack: Final episode of the customs drama, with Caroline Lee Johnson, Steve Toussaint and Cherie Lunghi (9/6) (7) (1350)
- 10.00pm News at Ten: Weather (7) (45850)
- 10.30pm HTV News and Weather (7) (592879)
- 10.40pm Thursday Night Live: Hard-hitting debates (4827508)
- 12.10am WEST: Tales from the Darkside: A young teenage hacker gives his sister instructions she believes will enable his computer to resurrect him (7) (672980)
- 12.10pm WALES: We Can Work It Out: New cars which spring leaks (5072880)
- 12.40pm The Jerry Springer Show (7) (3880560)
- 1.25pm T in the Park: Highlights of the Scottish music festival (847366)
- 2.25pm Box Office America (7) (898631)
- 2.55pm Cybernet Computer news (429183)
- 3.20pm Murder, She Wrote: While in Australia, Jessica sparks a clash between sheep farmers and miners (3152633)
- 4.10pm Potty About Pets (7) (408183)
- 4.40pm Coach Luther's dog gets (8376812)
- 5.00pm HTV News: Weather (7) (181)

- CENTRAL**
- As HTV West except: 12.20pm-12.30pm Central News: Weather (7) (5161411)
 - 1.00pm Echo Point (82817)
 - 1.30pm The Jerry Springer Show (7) (101072)
 - 2.15pm-2.45pm Home and Away (7) (970527)
 - 3.20pm-3.25pm Central News (7) (909607)
 - 3.30pm-3.35pm Shortland Street (9207411)
 - 3.45pm-3.55pm Central News: Weather (7) (458527)
 - 4.00pm-4.05pm Lifestyle (7) (521614)
 - 10.30pm-10.40pm Central News: Weather (7) (592879)
 - 1.30pm-1.35pm Pirata TV (2941305)
 - 1.55pm Highlander (7) (8802818)
 - 2.45pm Pop Down the Pub (7) (97563)
 - 3.15pm Cybernet (8030436)
 - 3.40pm Potty About Pets (4222470)
 - 4.10pm Central News: Weather (7) (508137)
 - 5.20pm-5.30pm Asian Eye (7425812)

- WESTCOUNTRY**
- As HTV West except: 12.15pm-12.27pm Westcountry News: Weather (7) (7124879)
 - 12.27pm-12.30pm Illuminations (852440)
 - 1.00pm Emmerdale (7) (7) (52817)
 - 1.30pm The Jerry Springer Show (7) (101072)
 - 2.15pm-2.45pm Home and Away (7) (970527)
 - 3.20pm-3.25pm Westcountry News: Weather (7) (909607)
 - 3.30pm-3.35pm Birthday People (5308237)
 - 3.40pm-3.45pm Home and Away (7) (970527)
 - 3.50pm-3.55pm Westcountry News: Weather (7) (909607)
 - 10.30pm-10.40pm Short Story Cinema (5072980)

- MERIDIAN**
- As HTV West except: 12.15pm-12.30pm Meridian News: Weather (7) (5161411)
 - 1.00pm-1.05pm Meridian Tonight (7) (508)
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 - 8.05pm-8.10pm Meridian News: Weather (7) (592879)
 - 8.10pm-8.15pm Meridian News: Weather (7) (592879)
 - 8.15pm-8.20pm Meridian News: Weather (7) (592879)
 - 8.20pm-8.25pm Meridian News: Weather (7) (592879)
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 - 8.55pm-9.00pm Meridian News: Weather (7) (592879)
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 - 10.55pm-11.00pm Meridian News: Weather (7) (592879)
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 - 12.55pm-1.00pm Meridian News: Weather (7) (592879)
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 - 1.50pm-1.55pm Meridian News: Weather (7) (592879)
 - 1.55pm-2.00pm Meridian News: Weather (7) (592879)
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 - 2.05pm-2.10pm Meridian News: Weather (7) (592879)
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 - 2.35pm-2.40pm Meridian

